From Hippocrates to Spock - The History of Pediatrics:
Selections from the W. Bruce Fye History of Medicine Library

Introduction:

With the progress of civilization, the care of the child adapted and gradually took shape as the result of observation and experience handed down from one parent to another. Mother’s sought to understand and ease the suffering of their children. Sometimes it was obvious that some strange food caused ill effects or a bodily wound by man or beast was to blame, but more often the cause was mysterious, some strange effect of the elements, some influence of evil spirits, and remedies were to be sought in offerings to some offended deity. Also, the affects, supposed or real, of herbs became part of family lore and mothers had simple remedies gathered from woodland or field for childhood ailments.

Medicine in its beginnings had very little to add to this homespun wisdom collected by generations of mothers as far as children and their diseases were concerned. It was only when the era of clinical observation began and the spirit of scientific inquiry awoke, reasoned rule began to replace the crude ideas of the past. Physicians began to realize that childhood presents features peculiar to itself, not only in the phenomena of development, but also in the symptoms and cure of disease.

This exhibit features titles from earliest times to the mid 1900’s and is by no means an exhaustive compilation of the history of pediatrics.

Illustration by Walter Crane from Goody Two Shoes

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