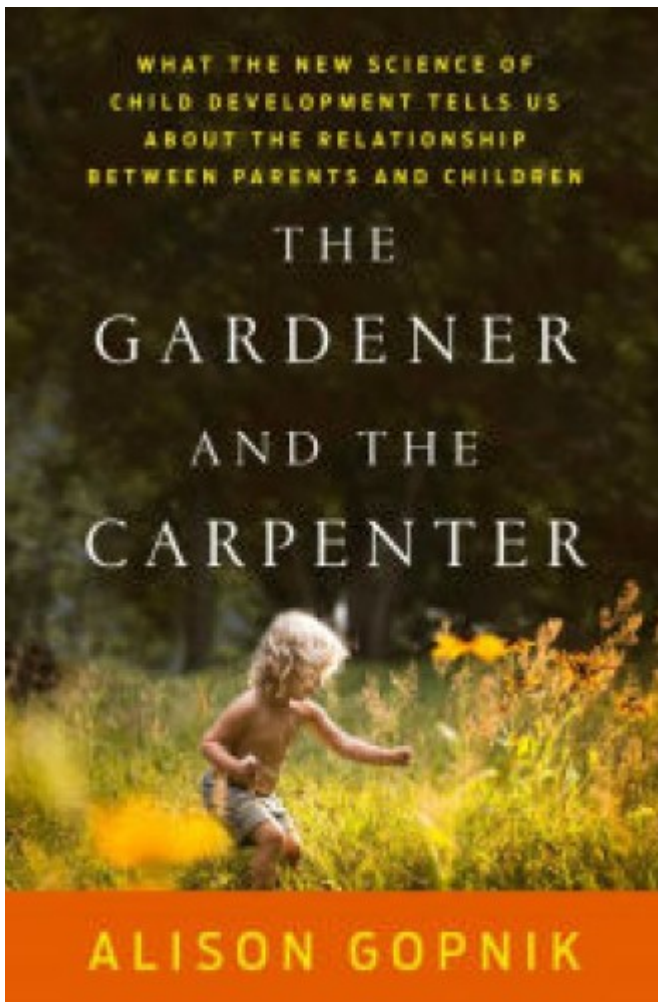


The Gardener and the Carpenter, by Alison Gopnik

Books in the [October 25, 2016](#) issue

In Review



The Gardener and the Carpenter

By Alison Gopnik

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Caregiving is a form of love rooted in relationship, not a form of work. So argues Alison Gopnik, who teaches at the University of California, Berkeley, and is known for her research on the psychology of children. Drawing upon neuroscience, philosophy,

and social psychology, Gopnik shows how “the parenting model” (aimed at producing a particular type of child, as a carpenter produces a chair) often fails to engage the plastic minds of young children. Undirected play within a secure context that allows for a plurality of values may be the best way for children to form character and morality. “Deciding on rules for wall ball is a prelude to legislation; building a tree house is building a city in miniature.” Gopnik eloquently demonstrates that in caring for children, as in any human relationship, process is more important than product.