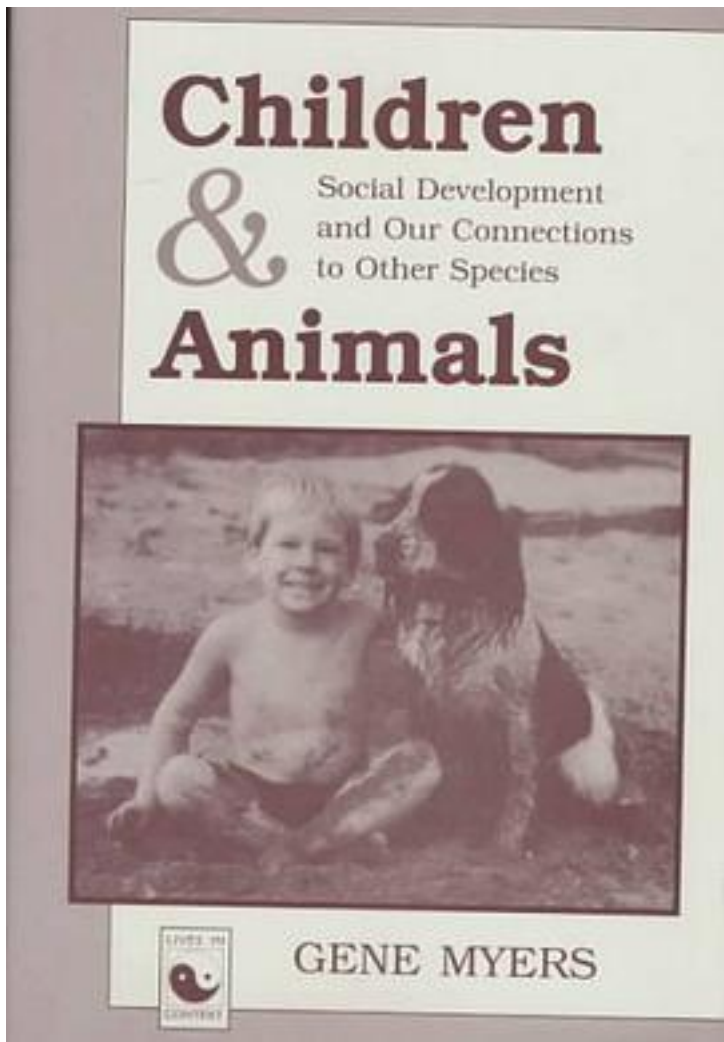


Children And Animals



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What role does an animal play in a child's developing sense of self? Do children and animals interact in ways no longer recognizable to adults? *Children and Animals* addresses these and many other intriguing questions by revealing the interconnected lives of the inhabitants of the preschool classroom—an environment abounding in childish verbal and nonverbal interactions with birds, turtles, toads, snakes, bugs, and other creatures. The child-animal interactions captured here suggest that the young child's developing sense of self and interactive skills are honed and enriched by the presence of nonhuman creatures. In touching and playing with animals, in talking to them or in silent presence, children reveal feelings and objectives they share with these important members of their daily lives. A privileged route by which these meanings are expressed and made conscious is pretend play, in which children translate the shapes and moods of the animal body into their own. As adults, we tend to marginalize the role of the animal body and animals' presence in our lives. In contrast, children see animals as co-conspirators, as creatures to contend with, as fascinatingly different yet similar "other beings." Children's sense of connection to animals provides insights into social development—and into our ideas about what it means to become human. Based on Gene Myers' study of two dozen children, and containing excerpts from children's dialogues with their nonhuman playroom cohabitants, this book is a delightful and rewarding opportunity to learn how children craft a sense of self that differentiates them from the animal world. It captures in a child's own words the importance of animals, birds, and reptiles to the child's growing social self. Parents, educators, and students of early childhood social development, as well as those intrigued by the intersection of human experience and the natural environment, will find this book to be a rewarding reading experience.

作者介绍:

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