

TRIO'S 'BABY' IS THE FATHER OF ALL BOOKS

DAD RIGHT!



KIDS' PLAY: Fathers, from left, Scott Lancaster with Pyper, Eric Mooij with baby daughter Ava, and Stefan Korn with son Noah.

i AT A GLANCE: Parenting tips

- Help your partner not to drink alcohol by not drinking yourself when you're together. In other words, don't rub it in that she can't drink for a while.
- Try to get along to all the screenings and ask lots of questions.
- Keep your fingernails trimmed. Apart from reducing the chances of scratching your little darling, it will make cleaning infant excrement from under them easier on your stomach.
- Skin-on-skin contact is great for baby. It aids bonding and keeps them warm.
- A great way to control the number of toys is to use a toy basket, adopting the philosophy that once it's full that's enough. When you purchase or are given a new toy, make it a policy to give away an old toy.
- Blowing bubbles is not only fun, it keeps infants entertained and helps develop their eye-tracking skills.
- Never underestimate the power of day-to-day objects as endless sources of fascination for babies.

THREE Men and a Baby was a box-office hit and now three Kiwi men are hoping their "baby" will prove just as popular. Scott Lancaster, Eric Mooij and Stefan Korn have turned their journey into fatherhood into a guide for first-time dads.

Written entirely from a male's perspective, Call Me Dad! is a down-to-earth, humorous guide covering everything men need to know about pregnancy, childbirth and their baby's first year.

The book was born from the authors' successful "father friendly" website www.diyfather.com which saw them become authorities on fatherhood.

Scott founded the website in 2007 after he learned to his shock he was going to be a first-time dad.

"When my wife was pregnant with our main little lady, Pyper, she pretty much told me I was going to be a stay-at-home dad so I needed to know a few things," he told *Sunday News*.

"There wasn't really much on the web and I wasn't a great (book) reader so I decided I would look at setting up my own website."

He approached friend Eric and fellow businessman Stefan, who agreed there was a lack of resources for fathers, and decided to set up a website for fathers.

"We started off as a blog of things that happened in our lives

and with our little people," Eric said.

Now the site offers practical information about parenting from a male perspective and has lots of discussion groups.

The website has proved so popular it now gets 100,000 page hits a month, with most coming from the US and New Zealand.

Its popularity brought the Wellington-based dads to the notice of Plunket and the Social Development ministry, who signed them up to run father-only parenting education courses.

"They realise that they've worked with mothers and the child but they've forgotten about the father, so they want to use us as a way to get to fathers," Scott said.

In December 2007 publishing company New Holland approached the men to write a guide on fatherhood.

They signed the contract in February 2008 and the book was completed by September.

Scott, Eric, 37, and Stefan, 39, all wrote different sections.

"We split up the book and did different sections we knew a bit more about. For example, Pyper got sick after about five or six weeks and was in hospital for a few days so I found I could write about that," Scott said.

The book, which hit shelves here on Thursday and will be released in the coming months in the UK, is not a "how you should do it" book Scott, 33, said.

"We tried to make it advice or things we've learnt rather than 'this is how you should do it' because, I think for men especially, you'll just turn them off."

They also included their own experiences in the book because "guys relate to personal experience, they want to know what's a real story".

He said they were different fathers with different backgrounds – Scott is full-time dad to Pyper, 18 months, while the others work full time. Eric has three older children from a previous marriage. Scott and Stefan are first-time dads – which helped them draw on a variety of experiences.

The trio plan to continue expanding their website and intend to write a "few more books".



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PICTURE PERFECT: Scott hugs baby daughter Pyper.

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