1-2-3 Magic: Expert Consensus

In the fourth edition of Self-Help That Works, John Norcross, Ph.D., asked thousands of mental health professionals what child discipline books they recommended most frequently and which programs worked the best. 1-2-3 Magic received a "Highly Recommended" 5-Star rating.

“Highly Recommended”


1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12  ★★★★★
(2010) by Thomas W. Phelan

This humorous book takes the reader through the 1-2-3 disciplinary approach with colorful and applicable illustrations. How to successfully start behaviors (e.g., cleaning room) and stop them (e.g., tantrums) are clearly described. The false assumption that the child is a little adult and the big mistakes parents make of showing too much emotion and explaining too much are played out in lighthearted but all too familiar scenarios. Phelan demonstrates established behavioral and Adlerian principles in novel ways. Updated every few years, this book has obtained deserved commercial success and impressive sales of more than a million copies. The book is written to instruct parents in accomplishing the program, but also to demonstrate empathic support of the challenges confronted by contemporary families.