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## Death-defying father chronicles son's first year

by Amy Wenk

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October 16, 2009  
Sandy Springs resident Barack Levin in 2004 gave up his office job to care for his first child, Eden.

He turned the experience into a book called "The Diaper Chronicles."

"I had two reasons for being so eager to immerse myself in dirty diapers, drool and strained peas," said the native of Tel Aviv, Israel. "First, I had developed some unusual theories on how to raise great kids ... and second, I was dying."

After moving to Pittsburgh to attend graduate school in 1996, meeting a French woman named Michelle and falling deeply in love, the then 26-year-old Levin was diagnosed with Membranoproliferative Glomerulonephritis. The life-threatening disease causes kidney failure, has no known cause and no cure. He was given less than five years to live.

"For me, this was like a death sentence," wrote Levin in the book. "I could not even comprehend it. There I was, a young adult with his whole life ahead of him, with no apparent illnesses or aches, getting such bad news. It felt unreal."

But Levin has defied the odds and persisted well past the medical prediction.

"I live on borrowed time right now," said Levin, who also has a nearly 4-year-old daughter, Oriane. Eden is 5 and attends the Davis Academy on Roberts Drive. "I don't go to bed every night with regrets."

He was pleased to finish "The Diaper Chronicles" this August after starting the book several times since his son was born.



Barack Levin, his wife Michelle and their two children, Eden and Oriane. ([click for larger version](#))

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The 210-page book details Levin's and Eden's first year together and the lessons learned.

"It's a funny book, but still I think it's very insightful," said Levin, who raised his children trilingual [Hebrew, French and English]. It provides advice and tips on "how to lay the foundation for raising independent, well-behaved children."

In the book, Levin covers basic topics like sleeping, eating and potty training.

"There are no shortcuts when it comes to raising a child," wrote Levin. "The more you invest, the greater the returns, just as with a 401K plan. Put the time into your children and it will make your life easier when they grow up."

"The Diaper Chronicles" also discusses Levin's concepts like the "4N" theory that aims to satisfy a baby's four needs: napping, nourishment, neatness and nurturing.

"By providing these basic needs in a timely manner, I will be able to earn his trust, set his and my schedules, and get him to be an easy baby to take care of," he wrote about the theory.

In addition, the book outlines a way to childproof one's home without using safety contraptions, limit television exposure and manage daily frustration.

"My year with Eden taught me more than I could possibly squeeze into a single book," wrote Levin in the final chapter. "It changed me as a person and taught me the best lesson in life — how to make a difference in the life of a child.

"I think that overall, I can pat myself on the back for doing a great job. But the truth is the experiment will never end. Eden will have my attention for as long as I have it to give."

For more information, visit [www.baracklevin.com](http://www.baracklevin.com).



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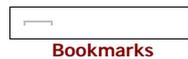
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