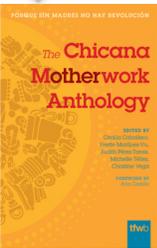




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The Chicana Motherwork Anthology

by Cecilia Caballero (Editor), Yvette Martínez-Vu (Editor), Judith Pérez-Torres (Editor), Michelle Téllez (Editor), Christine Vega (Editor), Ana Castillo (Foreword)

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The Chicana M(other)work Anthology weaves together emerging scholarship and *testimonios* by and about self-identified Chicana and Women of Color mother-scholars, activists, and allies who center mothering as transformative labor through an intersectional lens. Contributors provide narratives that make feminized labor visible and that prioritize collective action and holisti ...more

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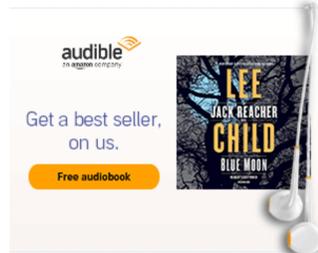
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Several years ago I joined an education grassroots organization called the People's Education Movement. As part of the People's Ed, I would go to an Inquiry Group meeting once a month or so where we would read scholarly articles and literature that would help inform our critical lens as educators. After becoming a parent, it became a little harder to participate. But I try to continue the practice every so often by reading books and articles on my own when I see friends post about them on social media or when friends share their own work.

My reading of this type of literature is not extensive. But up until reading Revolutionary Mothering and now Chicana M(other)work, I had not read much literature that captured the marginalization I felt when I became a mother and also the increased revolutionary spirit that hits some of us like a wave after becoming a parent. This book captures both.

I don't think I felt as unwelcome or pushed out of spaces as I did until I became a mom. Not too many spaces create a welcoming environment for breastfeeding, diaper changing, the sounds of laughing/screaming/crying, carrying big or multiple bags, carrying several pieces of equipment, restroom access for people of a smaller size, access to washing your hands for people of a smaller size, the list continues. I felt pushed out but also very aware of the privilege I have as an able bodied person to push back.

Although this book focuses a lot on academia - I am in education but not academia - the experience is very similar. Many of the contributors point out how one is expected to either continue as if your children and experiences as a mother are nonexistent or one is allowed to fade away from certain environments with very few resources to help you stay in that space. The book also addresses the additional layers of marginalization that occur if you are a mother of color or are parenting children of color. But in each chapter, you had examples of mothers challenging spaces, both in and out of academia, to allow room for mothering in all its forms.

My three favorite chapters were "Fierce Mamas Rising: Navigating the Terrain of Motherhood as Formerly Incarcerated or Convicted Women," "A Chicana Mother-Daughter Spiritual Praxis," and "My Forever Sleeping Baby: On Research, Stillbirth, and Remembrance." These chapters were about pushing spaces to make room for the many experiences of motherhood. The first highlighted the need to reform prisons so that they remove the obstacles that make it extremely challenging for incarcerated mothers to parent. The second pointed out that Chicana/Latina mothers who do not have access to traditional forms of supporting their daughters' academic trajectory (extracurriculars or the ability to navigate the education system) give them an equally rich type of support through their spirituality and faith. The third pointed out how academic and professional spaces often silence the experiences of motherhood, particularly the painful ones. She highlights how one's academic/professional experience and one's parenting experience can actually co-exist.

Not gonna lie, I had a little trouble with some of the more theory-based vocabulary. Still, it was a really helpful read to see how many women are using their motherhood to revolutionize spaces to be more inclusive. As I mentioned before, when you center the experiences of children, mothers of color, and other communities that are marginalized, we will find that taking care of ourselves and our communities will become a central value in our society.

Finally, can we get some dads up in here reading these books PLEASE! Your absence is noticeable. ([less](#))

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