

Autism Book  
Review  
Compendium

**by Students in**

*Autism Theory & Interventions* course

**Collaborative Autism Training & Support  
Program**

Sonoma State University

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***Autism Book Review Compendium***  
**Autism Theory and Interventions, Spring 2008**

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**Ball, J. (2008). Early intervention and autism: real-life questions and real-life answers.**

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**Exkorn, K. (2005). The Autisms sourcebook everything you need to know about diagnosis, treatment, coping, and healing.**

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**Levy, Jonathan. (2007). What you can do right now to help your child with autism.**

**McCarthy, J. (2007). Louder than words.**

**McClannahan, L. E., & Krantz, P. (1999). Activity Schedules for Children with Autism: Teaching Independent Behavior.**

**Moor, J. (2002). Playing, Laughing and Learning with Children on the Autism Spectrum A Practical Resource of Play Ideas for Parents and Careers.**

**Mukhopadhyay, T. R. (2000). The mind tree: A miraculous child breaks the silence of autism.**

**Notbohm, E. (2005). Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew.**

**Robison, J.E. (2007). Look me in the eye: My life with asperger's.**

**Ross, S.D., & Jolly, A.K. (2006). That's life with autism: Tales and tips for families with autism.**

**Sabin, E. (2006). The Autism Acceptance Book: Being a Friend to Someone with Autism.**

**Senator, S. (2006). Making peace with autism: One family's story of struggle, discovery, and unexpected gifts.**

**Shore, S., Rastelli, L. (2006). Understand Autism For Dummies.**

**Stewart, K. (2007). Helping a child with nonverbal learning disorders or Asperger's disorder. Second Edition.**

**Stillman, W. (2006). Autism and the God connection: redefining the autistic experience through extraordinary accounts of spiritual giftedness.**

**Tammet, D. (2006). Born on a blue day.**

**Stacey, P. (2003). The Boy Who Loved Window: Opening the Heart and Mind of a Child Threatened with Autism.**

**Wayne-Gilpin, R. (1993). Laughing and Loving with Autism: A collection of "real life" warm and humorous stories.**

**Williams, D. (1992). Nobody Nowhere: The Extraordinary Autobiography of an Autistic.**

**Wolfberg, P. J. (1999). Play & Imagination in Children with Autism.**

**Adams, C. (2005). A real boy: A true story of autism, early intervention, and recovery.** New York: Berkley Books.

Christina Adams writes her book about her family's struggle raising a child with autism with knowledge that can only be gained through experience. Adams begins her story with the painful realization that her son, Jonah, has autism. Her despair is not long endured, however, and she soon sets about investigating treatment options and making connections in the community with the iron will and tenacity of a mother who will never give up hope of her son's recovery. Adams used methods such as ABA, strict diets, special education, schools, drug therapies, and went through marriage troubles, innumerable visits to various doctors, and also thousands of dollars spent. After, months of nearly unbearable pain watching Jonah struggle to catch up with his peers, Adams and her fellowship of friends and family stood strong, confident of their ability to help Jonah recover, never willing to give up one inch to autism.

Adams' book is a warm, well written, often heartbreaking, yet heartwarming, and full of resources and ideas for her fellow parents struggling to raise a child with autism. However, the greatest gift her book instills, and the facet that stands out most, is hope. Adams has shown us firsthand that while autism cannot be cured, it is still very possible to find a treatment that can be so effective it becomes nearly impossible to tell that a child ever had autism at all.

*Reviewed by James Morrow*

**Ball, J. (2008). Early intervention and autism: real-life questions and real-life answers.** Texas: Future Horizons Inc.

This book was written for the parents of children who have autism and it is very easy to digest. The author of this book is James Ball and he is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst who has been working in the field for over twenty years. His book stresses the importance of early intervention and the steps that parents need to take early on in their child's life. This book does a very good job of looking at all the options available to parents and Ball encourages parents to try different things until they find what works for their child and them. Even though the author does a good job of presenting non-biased information he gives his suggestion throughout the book in a feature he calls, "Dr. Jim suggests". This book also includes a lot of real life stories from parents that span from when they first noticed that their child was different, to finding what interventions worked best for them.

Ball starts the book with an in depth look at the autism spectrum and how children and families are affected. Then he goes into depth detail about early intervention and what programs and methods are available to parents. He also highlights some of the common struggles that parents of young children must work through, such as melt downs, potty training, sleeping, and eating. This book is an extremely valuable resource for parents and professional. The author does an excellent job of conveying a mass amount of

information while still keeping it manageable. He includes many helpful tips and a section with picture examples of how to work with your child. Ball also includes a list of agencies and their contact information for parents and a glossary of key terms.

*Reviewed by Julianne Bettega*

**Ball, M. S. (1999). *Kiss of God: the wisdom of a silent child*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc.**

This book is written by Marshall Stewart Ball, who is a child with autism. The book is broken into multiple stories, letters, poems, and verses that Marshall wrote. Prior to each piece there is a short description in order to share with the reader the reasons behind the following passage. This book was Marshall's way of sharing his insights with the world. This novel is written in an easy-to-read format

To begin reading a novel knowing that the author is a child with autism, you immediately are curious as to what things this child has to say. Immediately you are compelled to read the entire book from cover to cover. Marshall Ball has an amazing way with words and puts together ideas that some have never even thought about. He has such a kind heart and shares that with the world throughout his stories. The words he has chosen to use show how truly intelligent children with autism are. This book sheds a light on a group of individuals sometimes negated because of some delay that they have been diagnosed with. This novel opened my eyes to realizing how much children have to offer to this world we live in.

*Reviewed by Megan Eaton*

**Barron, J. & Barron, S. (2002). *There's a boy in here: Emerging from the bonds of autism*. Texas: Future Horizons.**

This poignant, book, written by the mother and a son who has autism, shares the fear, anger, confusion, heartache, pain, triumph, joy, excitement, and breakthroughs as Sean, lives his life. In the younger years, Sean's parents and younger sister yearn for answers of how to help Sean function as best he can, but just when things seem to be going up, failure seems to kick in. His parents drove him all over the state of Ohio to different doctors and specialists, hoping to find answers to what seemed to most as strange, repetitive behaviors. He was prescribed three different drugs to counteract his hyperactivity, but none seemed to have a lasting, positive effect. Several times, Judy, his mom, was blamed for Sean's behavioral problems. Sean's schooling career was quite rough, but the greatest breakthrough occurred when he was a junior in high school, when Megan, his sister, invited him to eat lunch with her and her friends, and soon mentioned to his mom that he had school friends. Another breakthrough came one day when Sean was talking to his mom and it became clear to him that his actions were what people hated, not the person. He later graduated from college and moved back to his hometown, returning after five years in California. At the end of the book he shares about how failure

is okay, and the each individual's accomplishments varies according to their own uniqueness.

Since this is a biographical account, it really has an impact on you. I do not know how I would have responded to doctors if time and time again I was given negative feedback, and was almost always blamed for my son's behavioral problems. I would like to think that I would be as persistent and optimistic as Sean's parents were, searching for answers, always looking for alternatives when they were given false hope. I like that this book is co-written, so it truly gives you the perspective of someone who has autism, as well as what it is like to live with someone who has it. It was very informative, interesting, and inspirational.

*Reviewed by Charissa Jung*

**Cimera, Robert.** (2007). **Making Autism a Gift.** Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.

This book was written by Dr. Cimera, who was diagnosed with ADHD as a child, and it focuses on the positive features of autism. This book provides numerous strategies to help teachers, parents and other caregivers who work with children with autism maximize success. This book also provides up-to-date resources and advice about what the next step is when parents can no longer take care of their children. This book also covers issues such as obsessions, repetitive or ritualized behavior, temper tantrums and other behaviors characteristic of this disorder. The overall theme is hope and support for these uniquely gifted children.

This book is jam packed with information! You could read this over and over again and each time get something new and profound from it. On the other hand, it can be a little overwhelming. However, the overall message as embodied in the title, is so powerful that any parent or person who starts to despair about autism needs to read this book to show that there is hope and that each child with autism has unique and wonderful gifts that should be explored and supported. This is a book of hope and answers!

*Reviewed by Andrea Ormonde*

**Dawson, G., McPartland, J., & Ozonoff, S.** (2002). **A Parent's Guide to Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism: How to Meet the Challenges and Help Your Child Thrive.** New York: The Guilford Press.

This book covers two of the five conditions which fall under the Pervasive Developmental Disorder category. Those conditions, high-functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome, are commonly referred to as the same diagnosis. This book helps to differentiate and also identify the similarities. While there is a difference, the experiences of the parents of children with AS and those of the parents of children with HFA overlap in many areas. It is not simply an overview. *A Parent's Guide* includes

detailed information and tips. Topics such as diagnosis, treatments, schooling, and home life are discussed. It spans from issues in the preschool years to living as an adult with AS-HFA. The authors clearly note that the parent is the expert. The parents must be active as advocates and detectives. The book is always calling attention to the uniqueness of each child and encourages parents to recognize the individual strengths of their child.

The book is well organized and straightforward in its explanations. It gives an enormous amount of information, yet I don't believe it would further overwhelm a parent new to autism spectrum disorders. The book doesn't side with any one treatment or theory. The authors provide options and give the pros and cons to each issue. I found the tables useful and a handy resource to refer back to. Small vignettes are given in each chapter to give the reader a picture of how that subject emerges and relates to a person with AS-HFA. People who are familiar with autism spectrum disorders would find several areas to be repetitive, but it would be worth reading if you were interested in knowing specific information about AS and HFA. I think the book would be great for a parent or family member of a child who recently received a diagnosis, all people who work with children, and anyone wanting to know more about people in this area of the autism spectrum.

*Reviewed by Blair Dub*

**Ernsperger, Lori & Wendel, Danielle. (2007). *Girls Under the Umbrella of Autism Spectrum Disorders*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.**

This book was co-written by an expert in the field of autism and by a mother of a child with Asperger Syndrome. It addresses gender specific solutions for everyday challenges. The book is easy to read, broken into interesting and informative segments—Who are Girls with ASD, The Early Years, Off to School, Adolescence and Early Adulthood, Oh the Places You'll Go, References and a useful Appendix. Each segment covers common issues for that age, as well as personal excerpts from people with autism, as well as friends and family of those with autism. The main focus is to address the needs of girls on the autism spectrum and to provide advice on research-based strategies that may help.

Wendel, the mother and co-author of this book, gives wonderful accounts of her personal experiences living with an autistic girl and how she dealt with the challenges. It also gives tons of professional advice from Ernsperger on various topics from social skills to bullying to future goals and college. Not very many books are written specifically about girls on the spectrum and girl-specific behaviors, as they are far less diagnosed than boys. This book is written with great empathy and hope for girls with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

*Reviewed by Melissa Wilson*

**Exkorn, K. (2005). *The Autisms sourcebook everything you need to know about diagnosis, treatment, coping, and healing*. New York: HarperCollins.**

The Autism sourcebook is a good introduction to autism. The perspective Exkorn brings to the topic of autism is one of a mother whose son has recovered from autism. It is very readable and provides a lot of practical information. It provides useful information on how ASD's are diagnosed, treated, how to cope, and how to heal. The book is a good resource because it includes excerpts not just from Exkorn's child's story but also stories from other parents and siblings of children with ASD's. The book also includes many sources on how to get more information on ASD's. For instance, it has a section on national organizations, international organizations, internet sources, and further reading.

Exkorn does a very good job of describing the process that a parent might go through if their child has an autism spectrum disorder. She describes in great detail how to deal with the school system and getting what is best for your child. She gives good tips on what language should be used and how certain things can be misinterpreted. The book is also a good source to give you ideas on how the child's siblings might feel and tips on how to prepare yourself for situations you might go through. The Autism sourcebook is designed as a resource for a parent that has a child that has autism. The only suggestion that I have is that sometimes the author repeats certain information that she feels is important. The book would be more affective if instead of the repetition she had more excerpts of siblings or parents of children with ASD's. Also, it would have been helpful if there were more information about adolescents with ASD's and not just children. It is a good tool to use to find out basic information and how to go about getting what is best for your child.

*Reviewed by Luz Amanda Taleno*

**Firestone, B. (2008). *Autism Heroes: Portraits of Families Meeting the Challenge*. Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.**

This beautiful book is surely an inspiration to all; families of a child with an autism spectrum disorder, and those working with people with ASD's alike. Beautiful portraits of families taken by Joe Buissink run alongside transcribed interviews of those families and of their child or young adult with an autism spectrum disorder. These interviews act as a support for families with a new diagnosis. Each interview has a theme to it, that of hope, dignity, opportunity, and love. This is a quick read, easy to pick up and start again where you left off, when time is of the essence.

This is a beautiful book, a quick pick-me-up for any person feeling frustration or despair in their fight against autism. I would recommend this book to all families and people in the profession. The photography is delightful, giving personality to the interviews and inviting the reader to feel more connected to the words. Putting a face to the statements brings the reader into a deeper connection with the families interviewed, a refreshing change from the monotony of instructional handbooks that are so readily available. It is a breath of fresh air in the stifling world of autism.

*Reviewed by Erin Garavatti*

**Grandin, T. (2006). *Thinking in pictures: My life with autism*. New York: Vintage Books.**

This informative autobiographical book sheds light on autism spectrum disorders as Temple Grandin, a college graduate and famous in the cattle raising industry, describes her life with autism. Temple Grandin explains how she thinks differently than others, but also how she would not have had such a successful career without autism. Her family and mentors were a critical part of her childhood development and her knowledge about culture and society. She includes different treatment options and details about how each person is going to require a different combination and intensity of treatment. This book has been revised from the first publication and includes current research and information throughout the book.

Temple Grandin's honest and insightful portrayal of autism spectrum disorders incorporates a variety of useful approaches, techniques, and valuable knowledge that help families understand what their children may be experiencing. This book is especially helpful to families who need more insight on understanding what happens within the body and mind of an individual with an autism spectrum disorder. It is an engaging and easy read that lays out the fundamentals of autism while they relate to Temple Grandin's life. She writes a great deal about animals, particularly cows, describing the animals' views on life and how autistic thinking is similar to animal thinking. One criticism I do have is that much of the information is repeated several times throughout the book. I think that the points she tends to repeat are extremely important ones, but it may seem somewhat repetitive. It would be interesting if Temple Grandin writes a book particularly about her middle and later adulthood, as there will be an influx of adults with autism when all of the diagnosed children become adults.

*Reviewed by Melissa Moran*

**Greenspan, S.I., & Wieder, S. (2006). *Engaging Autism*. Perseus Publishing**

This book was an easy to understand book written for both parents and professionals about children diagnosed on the autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The book included an in depth look at the Floortime approach and helps parents and professionals help children overcome some of the most difficult symptoms that children with ASD suffer from. It also dissolves some myths that are most commonly mistaken for facts about autism. Greenspan also describes how the diagnosis of ASD doesn't have to mean a lost child, in fact the author describes how to engage and "win back your child." There is also a great section on how ASD might affect the family and how the family can affect the child on who is diagnosed.

Greenspan describes in an upbeat manner how children diagnosed with autism can overcome their challenges and become socially accepted people. It is a great book for both parents and professionals as it gives information on a good intervention using the

Floortime approach, which will also facilitate social interactions for these children. Along with how important early intervention is for children there is also some techniques about working with adolescent and older children using the Floortime approach. As the book was published in 2006, we can be certain that the information is up to date.

*Reviewed by Julia Adams*

**Haddon, M. (2003). *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time*. New York: Random House, Inc.**

Haddon's book tells a fascinating story from an unusual perspective: through the eyes of a child with autism. Though not autistic himself, Haddon has worked with individuals that have autism since he was a young man, therefore presumably providing an educated guess as to what can go on in the mind of a child in a confusing world that they sometimes cannot make complete sense of. The book itself serves as a journal to the main character, Christopher, a clever young boy, who confesses to the reader his struggles, misunderstandings, and determination in solving the mysterious crime of a murdered dog. Haddon's use of emotion, humor, and suspense make this book an extremely compelling read. The story's plotline expands and branches out, becoming more and more captivating by the page, as the reader learns more about Christopher's upbringing, the people he interacts with, his thought-processes, and his regular day-to-day routines.

This book is extremely well written, and quite easy to read. While I did find the story gripping, I would definitely consider it far from educational. As I stated before, Haddon himself does not live with autism, and concrete information about autism (such as therapies, diet, or medicine) is not in abundance. However, I do believe that this national best selling book provides an excellent platform to inform a broad population of what an individual with this particular disorder can experience, think, and feel. I believe it has (and will continue to) create an extremely positive impact on the world of literature, generating interest in a subject that is quite unknown to many people.

*Reviewed by Brandon Mohan*

**Heflin, L. J., & Alaimo, D. F. (2007). *Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Effective Instructional Practices*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.**

This book is a great tool for those who plan to, or already do, work with autistic students, and is a very informative read for anyone interested and/or involved in individual's lives with autism spectrum disorders. Heflin and Alaimo (2007) have acknowledged that in most schools the only treatments to be used are those that are research-based. They also make it point to state that it is important to collaborate with families and professionals to find a program that fits the unique learning needs of the individual with autism. This book covers the impact of sensory input and possible interventions, developing positive

behavior support plans, developing and encouraging communication, verbal behavior, social skills and competence, and much more.

Heflin and Alaimo cover a lot of information, some of which is primarily for use in an academic setting and other information can be used at school and/or at home. Throughout the book there is writing about the experience of a new educator, Ms. Harris, working towards becoming an effective teacher. It was helpful for me to read the writing about this teacher and her experience working with some of the material and techniques mentioned in the text. This read was at times challenging, but overall this book is set up in an easy way to follow and use. The headings, subheadings and index make it easy to reference this book for something specific. This book is pretty up to date, but I could see there needing to be a new edition within a couple years with all the new research, programs and attention that autism spectrum disorders are getting at the present time.

*Reviewed by Alyssa Palmer*

**Hoopmann, K. (2006). All cats have Asperger syndrome.** London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hoopman's book provides an interesting perspective on the world of someone who has Asperger syndrome, by comparing traits and habits to kittens. Through charming pictures and captions, the book visually displays a gentle explanation of the fact that people who have high-functioning autism are not intentionally "misbehaving" or stepping out of the line of rigid social conformity intentionally. Thus, the book gives a reason behind the atypical behavior of individuals that are on the autism spectrum, and shows these traits typically observed in cats. Hiding from the surrounding world that is often scary and too literal, taking enjoyment out of sometimes inappropriate situations, and simply having a difficult understanding of life are topics that are touched upon, as well as many others.

The book is very easy to read, and it is able to be appreciated and understood by readers of all different ages. Comparing the unique behavior of children with Asperger's with the mannerisms of cats displays a great parallel that makes the subject applicable and easier to understand. However, these parallels are not deeply rooted in science, and the only semi-serious nature of the book will not satisfy any reader looking for hard facts and insight. Instead, the book should be seen as a comparison to adorable kittens, which we all know and love, to individuals that we strive to better understand and relate to.

*Reviewed by Brandon Mohan*

**Jepson, Bryan. (2007). Changing the course of autism: A scientific approach for parents and physicians.** Boulder: Sentient Publications.

Bryan Jepson is the father of a child who has autism. He wrote the book, *Changing the Course of Autism* for parents, teachers, or caregivers to encourage them that though

autism may be genetic, there are also environmental factors that can cause the disorder. The book emphasizes that autism should be treated as a medical illness, not just a behavioral disorder. He explores the neurological, gastrointestinal, genetic, and environmental issues that complicate our views of autism. Jepson claims that autism has turned into an epidemic, and that our polluted environment is a possible cause.

For any parent or physician exploring bio-medical references for autism, this book is a must read. While it is not a step-by-step guide to treatment, he does include treatment plans. The format and language are easy follow, and this book is a great overview of medical insight. I would encourage any parent to read this who is looking for educated medical answers and new ideas for treatment.

*Reviewed by Kate Waldschmidt*

**Koegel, L. K., & Lazeznick, C. (2004). *Overcoming Autism : Finding the answers, strategies, and hope that can transform a child's life*. New York: Viking Penguin.**

This instructive book, co-written by a mother and clinician, was written for anybody working with a child recently diagnosed with autism. The authors give no illusions for a miracle "cure", but instead propose that with a lot of blood, sweat, tears, and determination every child will make improvements. They give practical solutions to problems by addressing specific challenging characteristics of an autistic child one by one and then presenting exercises and techniques that have been shown to be effective. They also stressed to the parent to be leery of those programs that cost too much and promise the world. The authors, most of all, stress the importance of early intervention and effort, explaining the importance of both in the progression of the child.

The book bounces between comments from the clinician who is one of the leading professionals in her field, back to comments from a mother who found these techniques to be incredibly helpful. Her candid approach and openness permit the reader a closeness that is heartwarming. The book is warm and inviting and offers compassion and understanding to a parent who may be struggling with the psychological issues that arise from a diagnosis of their child. This book is very well designed to help alleviate stress and give hope at the end of a long dark tunnel for parents and professionals working with children with autism.

*Reviewed by Erin Garavatti*

**Leimbach, M. (2006). *Daniel isn't talking*. New York: Anchor Books.**

This intriguing, imaginative work of art, written by a professor of creative writing at Oxford University, describes the trials and tribulations a family goes through before and after their son is diagnosed with autism. Although a fictional novel, it provides some helpful and realistic ideas for parents who know that there is something "unusual" about their child and what they can do to help their child through, what Leimbach

describes as a life long “difference”. The author does not offer “cures” or at any moment state that a child with autism will someday be “normal”, but rather, offers encouragement to parents who are struggling to understand what is happening to their child. Daniel is taught through the method of Applied Behavior Analysis, and seems to show much progress, although not a “cure” by the end of the book, as his “teacher” Andy has told Daniels’ mother, will not happen. The book also discusses the various symptoms a child with autism may exhibit, as well as accurate methods to alleviate some of these symptoms.

Leimbachs’ sincere, humorous, and fascinating story is sure to draw in readers who have a large, minimal or no interest in autism, and perhaps offer some insight to those who know very little about this incredible “difference”, a word I saw as being very appropriate to describe autism spectrum disorders in the book. Difficult to put down, this book is an easy-read and one that may bring tears throughout to readers of various backgrounds. It is filled with dark, happy, and confusing moments of a young mother’s life, as she struggles to help her children in any way she can, without the full support of others, including that of her husbands. The authors’ warm and heartfelt writing style conveys the message of hope, and the idea that strength, love, compassion, and support from those who have a person with an autism spectrum disorder in their life can make a huge difference. Since the work is fictional, the information about autism spectrum disorders may not be completely accurate, and it is at the discretion of the reader to do further research into the various topics and methods presented therein.

*Reviewed by Meredith Rosenberg*

**Levy, Jonathan. (2007). What you can do right now to help your child with autism.** Naperville, Illinois: SoucreBooks, Inc.

This easy-to-read book provides a refreshing approach and basic techniques that will be beneficial to helping your child with autism. Written by Jonathan Levy and based on the techniques provided in the Son-Rise Program, this book illustrates the importance of supporting your child to participate in our interactive world, and explains ten specific tools that will help you and your child engage with one another. By focusing on one main goal of having your child interact on a consistent and deeper level, other skills, such as eye contact and language, will be developed and will progress as you continue to use this positive approach. This approach simply focuses on giving your child numerous reasons to want to join you in your interactive world, rather than to stay unplugged and avoidant.

Levy is exceptional at delivering this approach and message to parents as well as illustrating his approach through his numerous experiences with children across the spectrum. The jargon and explanations are kept simple, so that the reader can easily understand the content and feel empowered after reading the material. This book is very helpful and uplifting and is easy to apply right now with your child with autism. All these techniques to help bridge a level of engagement between you and your child are

beneficial to your child's development and will not be harmful to use. There have been many success stories of children who have progressed tremendously through these techniques and have overcome many previous barriers that held them in their avoidant world. Levy helps parents, siblings, relatives, and other caretakers to view autism in a new positive life in which you can better understand the child's world, as you bring him to understand and connect in your interactive world. I strongly recommend all individuals who know or work with children with autism to read this book, for it truly grasps positive techniques that will help you and your child connect. This book is truly amazing and offers the reader a hopeful approach to helping their child with autism!

*Reviewed by Jennifer Joyner*

**McCarthy, J. (2007). *Louder than words*. New York: Dutton.**

Jenny McCarthy is not only an actress and an author, she is a mother. This novel is her story and how she set out to "heal autism." McCarthy, just like so many other parents, thought her son was perfect and overlooked the signs of autism as slow development. This was until a very life changing event occurred; her son, Evan, began having severe seizures that no doctor could diagnose. McCarthy describes how many doctors they visited, how many medicines they tried, and how much pain she was enduring because no one could find a cure for her son. She finally found a doctor who diagnosed her son as autistic, and Jenny writes how this was actually a relief to her because she finally had a name and could begin treatment. This book explains the realization of how many children are being diagnosed, because even a celebrity such as McCarthy was put on waiting lists before her son could receive any treatment. Throughout the book, she not only talks about the affects of Autism on her son, but she gives her insight on how this disorder affects the whole family. She reveals how her marriage fell apart, how she had to work more than ever to pay all of the medical bills, and how difficult it was to change her entire lifestyle to accommodate her son's new diagnosis. This is a story of determination and strength as this mother tries many treatments, medications, and diets all with the hope that she may someday heal her beautiful son.

Jenny McCarthy's journey is truly inspiring and I would recommend this book to anyone, whether they know someone with autism or not. McCarthy makes this tragic story lighthearted with added humor throughout the novel. Seizures are mentioned in depth here, so if your child or person with autism suffers from those, this book may give you some insight or even names of doctors that may be able to give you the answers you have been searching for. The only downside to this novel is that McCarthy is a celebrity and therefore she was able to meet and afford the best treatments and doctors in the country. Not every family has this opportunity, but nonetheless, this story will inspire any parent or person to begin their own "journey in healing Autism."

*Reviewed by Jenna Brown*

**McClannahan, L. E., & Krantz, P. (1999). Activity Schedules for Children with Autism: Teaching Independent Behavior.** Woodbine House, Inc.

This book was written to provide parents, professionals or people who work in a related field with information on activity schedules for children or adults with Autism. McClannahan and Krantz provide readers with eleven chapters of extremely useful and detailed information on how to teach and use activity schedules and how to make life easier for the child and family. McClannahan and Krantz give readers information on how to teach children the necessary skills needed before teaching how to use a schedule book. They also provide some information on how to select and prepare the materials needed for the schedule book. They talk about how to prepare and identify rewards based on the child's interests, and how to set up the living and learning environment for the child. They also discuss the importance of teaching social interaction skills and how to include them in their schedule books. They provide information on how to prepare to teach, how to manually guide the child, and the use of rewards, graduated guidance, spatial fading, shadowing, decreasing physical proximity, and how to deal with errors. They provide readers with examples of ways to measure the child's schedule following. They talk about how to add new pictures and activities after the child has mastered their first schedule, and they discuss teaching time management skills and when activities end. They also provide information on teaching children to make their own choices on what activities and rewards they want. They also talk about introducing words along with the pictures to teach children reading skills.

McClannahan and Krantz provide us with very useful and detailed information that is very easy to read and follow. It is a great text for those who want to learn to use schedule and activity books with their children. They give plenty of information and provide the readers with some picture examples, short stories of children with Autism using the books, and answer frequently asked questions, and the benefits of using activity schedules.

*Reviewed by Angelica Romero*

**Moor, J. (2002). Playing, Laughing and Learning with Children on the Autism Spectrum A Practical Resource of Play Ideas for Parents and Careers.** London, United Kingdom.

This is a very informative book written by a mother of a child with autism. This book is full of not only play ideas but also ways to break these play ideas into workable stages. She offers ways to gain the child's attention and expand it to constantly obtain small achievements. It also includes case studies that illustrate the theory and principles she talks about. Each chapter includes an assortment of ideas around a central theme including music, art, physical activities, outdoor playing ideas, puzzles and turn taking.

Julia Moor is English and it is very obvious so if you are familiar with the English culture you might find yourself smiling, as I did, at references to plasters (band aids) and potato crisps (potato chips). This is a book jam packed with helpful ideas to connect with

children with autism and to slowly prolong that connection. The case studies are also very helpful in explaining just how parents have used these ideas with their children. Another great thing about this book is the way it is organized you can either read the whole thing or if you are having a specific problem you can flip right to that section.

*Reviewed by Andrea Ormonde*

**Mukhopadhyay, T. R. (2000). *The mind tree: A miraculous child breaks the silence of autism*. New York: Riverhead Books.**

This is an amazing, easy-to-read and easy-to-digest book written by a young boy diagnosed with autism, which offers an inside look at how one with autism may perceive the external world. The author of this book, Mukhopadhyay appeared to the outside world as a mute child with classical autism; however his mind was very active and intelligent. At the age of eight and eleven, Mukhopadhyay was able to write this book of his experiences with the world around him, and how he perceived different situations. This book illustrates the importance when looking at people with autism, that one cannot judge a book by its cover. Mukhopadhyay explains his behaviors and his thought process in detail, allowing the reader to see the other side of autism; the internal aspect. Following Mukhopadhyay's journey through life, thus far, allows the reader to see his own personal development, both external and internal, through his own eyes and perspective.

Mukhopadhyay has done a very important and miraculous task by breaking this silence around autism. Though this is an individual view and experience of living a life with autism, it offers much insight and understanding for those of us who want to know the internal thoughts and worlds that people with autism are living in. Mukhopadhyay does an excellent job at illustrating the difficulty of commanding his outer body to move a certain way or to reflect his inner emotions. This book is very inspirational and allows the reader to connect to Mukhopadhyay in a very personal way, a way in which one can feel his emotions. Mukhopadhyay also highlights the difficulty in communicating his thoughts, emotions, or even words to others. However, Mukhopadhyay has overcome this difficulty by acquiring the ability to write and now is able to convey all of his inner thoughts, secrets, and emotions through his words and illustrations. This book helped me break down the barriers that are often held up regarding autism, and allowed me to see the amazing individual behind the physical limitations of autism. This book is a must-read along with texts surrounding autism, because it offers a personal account, or the inside edition, of a boy's life, living with autism. It would be interesting to read another book written by Mukhopadhyay about his experiences with growing into a young adult, now that he is twenty years old.

*Reviewed by Jennifer Joyner*

**Notbohm, E. (2005). *Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew*. Future Horizons, Incorporated**

Notbohm give a refreshing perspective of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Written from the viewpoint of a child with Autism; Notbohm give a voice to a population that often struggles to express themselves. Written from Notbohm personal experiences as a parent; her humor and heart are captured in the top ten characteristics that shed light into the inner workings of children with autism. This book is a quick and easy read with 10 short chapters. Every chapter is depicting a different aspect of the child.

This book puts ASD into perspective. The mere fact that it is written from the perspective of a child with autism makes it seem as though you're being spoken to. This is definitely a book that needs to be read by all those who work with children with autism: teachers, friends, even family. My favorite chapter was Chapter 2: My sensory perceptions are distorted. She describes the grocery store scenario, I myself, was getting overwhelmed. It was made very vivid as to why some children may behave the way they do. After reading this book I see the potential for amazing possibilities. This book aids in the understanding of autism, which leads to acceptance and compassion. With acceptance and compassion these children can unlock the amazing gifts they have hidden inside them.

*Reviewed by Nathalie Koka*

**Robison, J.E. (2007). Look me in the eye: My life with asperger's.** New York: Random House Inc.

This autobiography tells the story of a man named John who happened to have aspergers, but didn't get diagnosed until he was forty years old. By this time he had gone through his life learning to cope with his differences on his own. John grew up in a household with an alcoholic father and absent mother, and when they got divorced the family became even more dysfunctional. John had an incredibly hard time throughout school until finally he ended up dropping out and started working on electronics, which was his passion. He got into working on sound amps, then worked for KISS and made them guitars with special effects, he felt accepted and welcome in the music world. Once he got burnt out on this, he became a design engineer. He went through a few other random jobs and then got into restoring old cars.

Like many individuals on the spectrum, John lacked social conditioning and felt he did not get the respect he deserved for his disability. Instead, he was considered arrogant, aloof or unfriendly. As time went on, he married twice and had a child from the first marriage, who was also diagnosed with aspergers. Getting his own diagnosis was a life transforming experience and he learned to appreciate the benefits he had by having this disorder, such as his compulsion with knowledge, directness and treating everyone the same. He had a trade off; once he had increased emotional intelligence he lost his "expressions of creative genius". Since this was something he had had his whole life it was worth a life that was immeasurably happier, richer and fuller with more friends.

*Reviewed by Alyssa Palmer*

**Ross, S.D., & Jolly, A.K. (2006). *That's life with autism: Tales and tips for families with autism*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.**

This fast paced book consists of a compilation of tales from parents and grandparents who care for children on the autism spectrum. The nine chapters offer a myriad of information on topics including but not limited to treatments, interventions, therapies, family and marriage issues, dietary and food tales, and methods on navigating school systems, just to name a few. At the end of most stories, parents offer tips on what had helped them to be successful with their children, as well as dealing with others in the world during their journey. Each chapter concludes with a “professional’s perspective”, in which a professional, working in the field of autism, writes about important things parents should know and be aware of in order to help their child in the best way possible. The book provides discussion questions as well and activities that parents can do to create a positive and happy environment for their child with autism, as well as themselves and others working with their child.

The editors did a magnificent job of putting these heartfelt stories together. The variety of topics was great, and I really enjoyed how each family’s story was unique, pertaining to their child’s age, diagnosis, and subject the parent was writing about. Most stories were very uplifting, and filled with hope and happiness. The tips provided by the parents were extremely encouraging, demonstrating that although autism is a challenge, parents are not alone by any means. My personal favorite chapter was *Autism is No Laughing Matter: Finding Humor in Our Daily Lives*. Parents wrote stories about how their children, perhaps unknowingly, gave them something to smile or laugh about, a necessary key to happiness in life. These stories demonstrated that although struggles with children with autism occur, the happiness and joy that they provide help to conquer those obstacles. The book itself definitely conveyed a positive and relatable message to parents who are dealing with or have dealt with similar experiences. In general, the text provided helpful information, although not from an incredibly professional standpoint, and didn’t go in depth about any particular treatment, therapy or intervention programs. Overall, the book was enjoyable and somewhat of a gift that the parents provided for families of a child with autism or simply folks interested in learning more about autism from a less professional perspective.

*Reviewed by Meredith Rosenberg*

**Sabin, E. (2006). *The Autism Acceptance Book: Being a Friend to Someone with Autism*. Watering Can.**

This is a wonderful book that offers educational information as well as engaging exercises and opens the door for conversations about children with autism. In a very sweet, kid-friendly and vibrant way, Ellen Sabin introduces children to the challenges

that face their peers with autism while showing the beauty in respecting other people's differences.

This is a great tool for any family struggling with helping others accept their child with autism. It offers a platform for families and teachers to talk with siblings, students and friends about strategies to employ when interacting with another child with autism. This book not only embraces the world of the autistic child, but explains it in a way that children can understand what it can be like to be autistic. My favorite aspect of this book is the empowerment it gives children by helping them understand the power of their actions and how they can be a good friend to others.

*Reviewed by Nathalie Koka*

**Senator, S. (2006). Making peace with autism: One family's story of struggle, discovery, and unexpected gifts.** Boston: Trumpeter Books.

This book is written by a mother of three boys, the oldest of whom has autism. Her account follows her family's journey as they encounter what life presents them, through the hardships, uncertainty, and achievements, they experience anxiety, fear, pain, and happiness. Senator describes navigating through multiple school programs, the roller coaster ride of trying out various medications, and moving to different areas in hopes of finding the best fit for her family. She notes how important it is to have compassionate and skilled teachers, medical specialists, and therapists. She explains how her strengths and weaknesses are balanced by those of her husband's and the importance of working as a team. Senator delights in her son's success on the Special Olympics gymnastics team. She notes the significance of supportive family and friends. Most importantly, Senator stresses the importance of being a loving, caring, flexible, and accepting family, and having a connection between each member.

This is an interesting book, and easy to understand. It is great for parents, as well as those working with people who have autism. There are several helpful and insightful tips, such as how to make "Nat Books," also known as crisis storybooks, that are on various topics, which are interspersed throughout in gray boxes, that are a valuable resource. She shares several strategies that worked for her son, as well as those that did not. While Senator is skeptical that people can be cured from autism, she is optimistic that they can improve greatly with the correct approach.

*Reviewed by Charissa Jung*

**Shore, S., & Rastelli, L. (2006). Understand Autism For Dummies.** New Jersey: Wiley Publishing, Inc.

I picked up *Understanding Autism For Dummies* by Stephen Shore and Linda G. Rastelli because I was familiar with the "For Dummies" books and liked them for their easy to grasp structure that I felt would be a draw for other people who were interested as well.

At first it may have seemed a little dubious in my head, but once I picked up the book and jumped in, its easy to read nature won me over. It is broken down into the umbrella topics of Understanding Autism, Addressing Physical Needs, Enhancing Learning and Social Skills, Living with Autism as an Adult, The Part of Tens, as well as a wonderful introduction by Temple Grandin, and a helpful appendix. If someone is interested in the field, or has an autistic child in the family, everything they could conceivably look for is in these pages. Not only is it extremely in depth at answering any questions, but it also is laid out in such an intelligent way that it is one of the few books that gives really clear overviews of important topics like finding autism specialists, creating an education plan, enhancing communication/social skills, looking at treatment options, and as I mentioned earlier an appendix that contains a wealth of resources.

You cannot fully understand how valuable a compendium of information like this is until you have seen how it is able to remove the hardships associated with trying to be an expert in something as diverse and complicated as the autism spectrum. I found this to be a reliable and, very importantly, easy to grasp book covering everything you could possibly want to know. As autism is now showing up more and more in the public eye, I believe this book is an important milestone for people who are interested. Out of the thousands of books on autism it maybe not be the most personal story based, but I think someone would be hard pressed to find one more informative. I give this book my highest recommendation possible.

*Reviewed by Tyler Wilcox*

**Stewart, K. (2007). Helping a child with nonverbal learning disorders or Asperger's disorder. Second Edition.** California: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

This book was written for parents of children with nonverbal learning disorder, NLD, and/or Asperger's disorder, or for parents who may be concerned about their child's development. The book contains clear and usable check lists for a parent to check out how their child is developing. It also provides the reader with a variety of tests that they can have their child go through to get a diagnosis. By providing parents with a variety of tests, the author is allowing for parents to research what they think will be the best test for their individual child. The author also intersperses stories of individuals with NLD or who have Aspergers, this gives the readers a chance to compare their child's or their students' development.

This book is a practical guide giving parents of newly diagnosed children resources and hope for their child's future. Because each of these children are so individual, it is really important that their intervention be really individualized. Stewart's book really allows the parent or teacher to research many different interventions and stresses the importance of an individual plan. She also makes sure the parent is aware that just because their child learns differently does not mean their child will not succeed in life. This gives hope to parents who are worried about their challenged child's future. This

book is the second edition and was published in 2007, giving it very up to date interventions and plans. This is important as this field is rapidly changing.

*Reviewed by Julie Adams*

**Stillman, W. (2006). Autism and the God connection: redefining the autistic experience through extraordinary accounts of spiritual giftedness.** Illinois: Sourcebooks, inc.

*Autism and the God Connection* is a masterpiece account of how spirituality intertwines in the world of a person with autism. William Stillman, a person with asperger's syndrome himself, sheds light on an issue that has otherwise been looked over as describing a person with autism having a closer connection to the etherial realm than those who have not been given such a gift. Stillman describes many stories of individuals that have authentic experiences involving clairvoyance that can only be explained by how sensitive they are as a human being with autism.

The most interesting part of this book was all the personal anecdotes that were collected by Stillman in his effort to validate his theory. Such accounts range from a ten-year old girl being able to know what her mother is thinking to a little boy who has a magnetizing effect on farm animals to a socially isolated child who only found solace in embracing and practicing religion. Stillman also brings the notion of symbolism into the novel with his lovely description of a ladybug and how the natural world serves to teach us simple lessons about life. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to see the world through a different lense, one that is nondenominational and aids us in understanding how beautiful the world is with the help of those with autism.

*Reviewed by Shiloh Stanfill*

**Stillman, W. (2006). Autism and the God Connection.** Illinois: Sourcebooks, Inc.

This eloquently written spiritual exploration of autism and related disorders was written by a man with Asperger's Syndrome. It is a quick read in which autism is explained and understood from a spiritual angle. The author uses various personal accounts and stories throughout the chapters, giving several perspectives on autism's correlation with a higher power or purpose. The book is organized into three parts; first the autistic's path is explored, secondly their divine experiences are detailed, and thirdly some validations are given. The author does a marvelous job with his religious explanations, making clear that his personal references to God could very well be references to a spirit or higher power. This is thus a great way to get a spiritual perspective of autism, regardless of one's religious preferences.

The author explores various aspects of religion and an autistic's daily experiences. He states commonalities in an autistic's natural aptitude toward God, thankfulness, gratitude, and purpose. There are also explanations and accounts of telepathy and spiritual ghost

sightings. If you aren't religious, don't let this turn you away from reading this incredible book. It is valuable even for a non-believer because it details strange accounts and experiences in hopeful and beautiful ways. It also encourages the care taker of an autistic child to remain open minded, compassionate and supportive through all the oddities that may occur with such a unique being. It emphasizes the gifts that special children bring to our world, and gives hope to anyone who reads the book. This book is strongly recommended to any parent or caretaker of an autistic child, as well as anyone interested in autism.

*Reviewed by Vanessa Fuller*

**Tammet, D. (2006). *Born on a blue day*. New York: Free Press**

Daniel Tammet's critically acclaimed autobiography *Born on a Blue Day* illuminates the mysterious world inside the mind of a person with autism. Tammet has Asperger's Syndrome, which falls on the spectrum of autism and this condition effects social adaptation, imaginative play and communication skills. Not only does he struggle with the many challenges presented to him that are associated with this disorder, but he also has a rare condition called a "savant". Such skills are rare in an individual and the most well know representation of savant skills was in the movie *Rain Man*. His savant skills are specifically designated to numbers and his unique ability to see numbers as all different shapes, sizes, colors, and templates. So whenever he is given a math problem, he can see the shapes melt together in his head to create a new shape. This new shape is ultimately the number that correctly answers the problem he would have been given.

Tammet had usual symptoms of autism as mentioned before in addition to his fixations on numbers and ritualistic behaviors for example always having tea at a certain time of the day, which would hinder almost anyone else from gaining hope of living an independent life. However, through Tammet's perseverance, he was able to not let the disorder stop him from living a happy life. He was able to travel the world, gain a life partner whom he still lives with currently, and began his own business teaching languages via the internet. So this book is a wonderful example of how someone who began life with a debilitating disorder was able to rise above the odds against him and eventually live the life he wanted. The life he deserved!

*Reviewed by Shiloh Stanfill*

**Stacey, P. (2003). *The Boy Who Loved Window: Opening the Heart and Mind of a Child Threatened with Autism*. Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press.**

This book is a compelling firsthand account written by the mother of a young child with autism. This mother is determined from the beginning not to let her son fall through the cracks or be treated by society as anything less than a whole person! Patricia is very

descriptive and open about each and every struggle she goes through to gain even the smallest outcome with her son Walker. She also takes into account the outcomes his rigorous therapy schedule has on the rest of the family- her husband and daughter. Patricia regularly received advice from guru Dr. Stanley Greenspan, which kept her continuously searching the latest treatment. She put no limits on the treatments she was willing to try for her son. Walker eventually shows improvement after many hours of sensory integration therapy and “floor time” to reduce his extreme sensitivities and a special diet to ease his frailty and eczema. The first changes seen in Walker’s improvement are related to speech. Getting him to communicate was such a huge step and soon he was even beginning to engage with people. Walker’s mother is not writing to advocate that her son was “cured”, but to encourage other parents to keep trying different therapies and not give up hope.

This book will definitely give inspiration to anyone who reads it! Patricia encourages parents to look beyond traditional therapy offered in many schools and research new opportunities available. Through her detailed descriptions of many things she tried or considered trying with Walker, parents can learn a lot of valuable information. This is also a great book for anyone who’s considering working with autistic children because it provides a new level of understanding, one from a family’s perspective.

*Reviewed by Rachel Meath*

**Wayne-Gilpin, R. (1993). *Laughing and Loving with Autism: A collection of “real life” warm and humorous stories.* Texas: Future Horizons.**

This collection of short stories is an easy-to-read and heart-warming must have for anyone wanting to get a glimpse into the life of a person with autism. Written and edited by the father of a son, Alex, with autism, the short stories compiled in the book are a combination of Alex’s and other people’s (who sent in their stories to the author) experiences with autism. The stories are categorized into a variety of topics including, Laughing, Music, Sexual/“Improper” Language, Church, Facilitated Communication, Home, Out into the “Real World”, School, and Poignant. As the author accurately points out, “This writing emphasizes the unique views that the persons with autism have of us, our values, our words, and the things we feel are so serious.” He also notes that his intention for the book is to be a source of smiles, laughter, and tears.

This is a great book for a wide range of people, from professionals in the field of autism to someone who knows nothing about this developmental disorder. The short stories are very easy to read and incredibly enjoyable, giving the reader a better understanding of the misunderstood lives of those with autism. This one book brings forth a multitude of emotions ranging from heart-wrenching sadness to uplifting joy. For those who know very little about autism, the author gives a brief, but accurate, description of the disorder in the introduction. The short stories also illumine the joys that people with autism bring to loved ones in their lives. I highly recommend this book, for it is now on my list of

favorite books that I believe everyone must read!

*Reviewed by Kate Sheller*

**Williams, D. (1992). *Nobody Nowhere: The Extraordinary Autobiography of an Autistic*. New York: Times.**

“This is a story of two battles, a battle to keep out ‘the world’ and a battle to join it” (Williams, 2004). *Nobody Nowhere* is an exceptional book about a young woman’s early life experiences. Donna Williams, who is autistic, tells the story of her struggles to understand her own and other people’s behavior in everyday situations. This story is an inspiring account of a girl’s development under difficult circumstances that keeps anyone reading on edge. Most of us will relate to the many trials of childhood and adolescence that Williams describes. Yet on the other hand, there are many insights for parents with autistic children, professionals working with autism, and people on the autism spectrum to learn and gain hope from Williams’ writing.

Williams’ account provides a wealth of knowledge to how autistic people function, feel, communicate and think. Throughout the book, Williams struggles to become “normal.” At the end of the book she realizes that she is a very normal person who has autism and has learned to cope with it. *Nobody Nowhere* illuminates many with experiences in working with autistic children and shows that there is hope for recovery and understanding. This truly amazing story is most remarkable to follow. To read Williams’ life transform from high-functioning autism to normality is an inspiration to the reader. This book paints a clear picture of life seen from an autistic point of view. I truly enjoyed reading this book. Williams’ struggles and triumphs took me on an emotional roller coaster that taught me a lot about autism spectrum disorders. I feel I can now relate more to what I have learned about autism. I strongly recommend this book and look forward to reading Williams’ other book titled *Somebody Somewhere*.

*Reviewed by Clemance Khoury*

**Wolfberg, P. J. (1999). *Play & Imagination in Children with Autism*. New York: Teachers College Press.**

Exploring the lives of three students, Teresa, Freddy and Jared, whom attended Pamela Wolfberg’s special education classes in northern California, this book provides ways in which we can help children with autism play and form peer relationships. Wolfberg explains how autism affects development of social interaction, communication and language differently in children. Play is an important part of childhood, which creates concern for children with autism who experience difficulties in play. Since play may cause anxiety or stress for a child with autism, due to peer rejection, they tend to withdraw themselves from their peers. Wolfberg explains the idea of Integrated Play

Groups, which allow children with autism to enjoy play among developing peers. With Integrated Play Groups, autistic children play with expert players while being supported by an adult. This book also goes into detail with each of the children Teresa, Freddy and Jared's situation and how they have grown and began to recognize their peers and have turned away from dependence on Wolfberg since entering the program. Most of the time peers responded to Teresa, Freddy and Jared while playing which created hope for more complex forms of play in these children.

Wolfberg's book provided ways in which we all can help children recognize the world of peer play. From reading about these three case studies, it gives you hope that with a little guidance and encouragement from adults and other peers, children with autism can develop the social skills necessary to communicate in play situations. It is also an excellent read about the theory of play in children throughout the ages. You get to understand what theorists were trying to find when they studied children and how different their studies are on children with autism. Wolfberg did an outstanding job bringing these three children's' cases to life. Through their backgrounds, stories, artwork and observations you really got to see the differences among the children and the best ways to deal with each child. I found it interesting learning about the different rituals each child had to create order and make sense of their daily lives. I enjoyed learning about the different approaches in Wolfberg's Integrated Play Groups. As we saw, this approach was successful with these children and I think it would be interesting to see if it helped encouraged play in all children.

*Reviewed by Christie Coyle*