

## Books About Disabilities

[Adapted with permission from the Council for Exceptional Children. The complete list may be found at <http://ericec.org/fact/kidbooks.html>.]

### FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Abeel, Samantha. *Reach for the Moon* (Learning Disabilities) Samantha, a 13-year-old girl with a learning disability in understanding mathematical concepts, provides a collection of illustrated poems and stories. She writes about her difficulties in middle school, including coping with her disability and the accompanying emotional challenges and the encouragement received by her English teacher to develop her writing talent.

Bach, Alice Hendricks. *Waiting for Johnny Miracle* (Cancer) Theo and Becky are 17-year-old twins when they find out Becky has a malignant tumor in her right thigh.

Benton, Hope. *Best Friends*. (Physical Disabilities) Kathryn, who uses a wheelchair, coaches her friend in coping with a broken leg.

Benton, Hope. *A Thousand Lights* (Hearing Impairments) Two brothers, Will and Donnie, one with a severe hearing impairment, climb Mt. Fuji in Japan.

Benton, Hope. *Down the Aisle*. (Physical Disabilities) The story of two sisters, one of whom has a physical disability (Kathryn), as they prepare to participate in a wedding.

Benton, Hope. *Whoa, Nellie!* (Physical Disabilities) A story of a young girl, Kathryn, who happens to have a physical disability and uses a wheelchair, her friends, and their experiences at summer camp as they search for a favorite horse.

Feinberg, Barbara. *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Gallant President* (Poliomyelitis) A biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Guccione, Leslie D. *Tell Me How the Wind Sounds* (Deafness) Amanda is 15 when she meets Jake on Clark's Island. She is angered at every encounter with him until he tells her he's deaf.

Hesse, Karen. *Wish on a Unicorn* (Mental Retardation) A sixth-grade girl, Mags, lives in a trailer and has a younger sister named Hannie with mental retardation. Hannie finds an old stuffed unicorn and believes it is magical when strange things start to happen.

Janover, Caroline. *The Worst Speller in Jr. High* (Reading Disability, Dyslexia, Learning Disability) Katie Kelso, an adolescent girl with dyslexia, describes her struggles with issues of peer acceptance, dating, and academic achievement, all of which are complicated by her dyslexia.

Josephson, Gretchen. *Bus Girl* (Down Syndrome) Gretchen, through poetry, describes her emotional development toward independence and adult relationships.

Kachur, Wanda Gilberts. *The Nautilus* (Physical Disabilities) Kathryn is an adolescent who longs to be a professional ballet dancer but is seriously injured in a car accident and must face her disabilities.

Kaufman, Sandra Z. *Retarded Isn't Stupid, Mom!* (Mild Mental Retardation) The mother of a child diagnosed as mildly retarded at age 2 recounts experiences of the child's growing up into an adult.

Kendrick, Deborah. *Health Care Professionals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired* (Visual impairments) This nonfiction book profiles several people who are visually impaired who work in a variety of healthcare jobs, including nursing professor, genetic counselor, and occupational therapist. Each profile contains information about the person as well as the job. The book is designed to assist young adults who are considering careers.

Kent, Deborah, and Kathryn A. Quinlan. *Extraordinary People With Disabilities*. (Various Disabilities) Nearly 50 men and women with mental or physical disabilities are profiled in this collection, including well-known figures such as Thomas Edison, Ludwig van Beethoven, Harriet Tubman, Tom Cruise, Chris Burke, and Robert Dole. In addition to those mentioned are a champion wheelchair marathoner with spina bifida, a partially blind ballet dancer, a photographer with polio, a deaf author and book reviewer, an Indian chief with muscular dystrophy, and an activist and psychotherapist with cerebral palsy.

Levinson, Harold, and Addie Meyer Sanders. *Turning Around the Upside-Down Kids: Helping Dyslexic Kids Overcome Their Disorder* (Reading Disability, Dyslexia, Learning Disability) Continuing with the eight characters from *The Upside-Down Kids*, these students and their compassionate teacher, Ms. Jensen, examine the various successful treatments for each child's unique symptoms in a way that is both comprehensive yet simple to understand.

Levinson, Nancy Smiler. *Annie's World* by (Deafness) This is about the adjustment of 16-year-old Annie to her family move that necessitates her becoming mainstreamed into a public high school.

Martin, Ann M. *The Baby-sitters Club #32: Kristy and the Secret of Susan* (Autism) Kristy baby-sits a child with autism after school and is fascinated to learn about autism and other disabilities as she gets to know Susan and her family. She deals with her own assumptions, other students' perceptions of children with special needs, and other disability issues.

Meyer, Donald, Ed. *Views From Our Shoes: Growing Up With a Brother or Sister With Special Needs* (Disabilities) Forty-five siblings share their experiences. The children whose essays are featured range in age from 4 to 18, with a variety of special needs, including autism, cerebral palsy, developmental delays, attention deficit disorder, hydrocephalus, visual and hearing impairments, Down syndrome, and Tourette's syndrome.

Myles, Haley Morgan. *Practical Solutions to Everyday Challenges for Children with Asperger Syndrome* (Asperger Syndrome) Nine-year-old Haley Myles offers practical suggestions for everyday situations faced by children with Asperger Syndrome. Haley has included sections on challenges at school, getting along with others, dealing with emotions, safety tips, first aid, and more.

Perske, Robert. *Don't Stop the Music*. (Cerebral Palsy) Follow our teen hero and heroine (with cerebral palsy) through thrills, romance, and adventure all rolled into this "who-done-it."

Robinson, Ray. *Iron Horse: Lou Gehrig in His Time* (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) Lou Gehrig, nicknamed the Iron Horse for the number of consecutive games he played for the New York Yankees baseball team, died in 1941 after a two-year struggle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Emily Good as Gold* (Mental Retardation) Emily, a 13-year-old girl with mental retardation, experiences adolescence.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Emily in Love*. (Developmental Delays) Emily is developmentally delayed. She is included in a general education high school and has to deal with her feelings of confusion, frustration, and anger toward her parents for protecting her too much, and at herself for being unable to understand and accomplish everything she wants.

Sagmiller, Girard J. *Dyslexia My Life: One Man's Story of His Life With a Learning Disability* (Reading Disability, Dyslexia, Learning Disability) Girard's autobiography dealing with dyslexia chronicles his struggles to overcome the ignorance and prejudice of his friends, family, and society in order to succeed in school, business, and life.

Schwier, Karen Melberg. *Idea Man* (Down Syndrome) Erin is angry when her parents leave her overnight with family friends. The family's older son, Jim, has Down syndrome and Erin doesn't want to be seen with him because he's known as the Dork, but kids from school witness Jim giving her a hug. She realizes she misjudged him after he helps her with a homework assignment.

Shreve, Susan. *Trout and Me* (Attention Deficit Disorder [ADD]/Learning Disabilities) Ben and Trout are best friends and both have ADD and learning disabilities. They have a great time together, but their pranks get them into trouble at school. Ben must make some difficult decisions about his friendship with Trout.

Swenson, John. *Stevie Wonder* (Blindness) This biography of Stevie Wonder covers his birth in Saginaw, Michigan, in 1950 through his rapid rise as a Motown artist in the early 1960s and up to his present-day work.

Tiefenbacher, Wendy. Ed. *Deaf Girls Rule*. (Hearing Impairments) This book of photographs highlights the 1998–1999 women's basketball team at Gallaudet University. The story of a team of deaf women who advanced to the NCAA Sweet Sixteen is told almost entirely in pictures.

Weiss, Jonathan H., Ph.D. *Breathe Easy: Young People's Guide to Asthma*. (Asthma) This book introduces children and adolescents to the mechanics of asthma and explores strategies for self-management of the condition. Anatomical and situational factors in asthma are explained in simple language with illustrative diagrams. Early warning signs of coming attacks and relaxation techniques are described.

Werlin, Nancy. *Are You Alone on Purpose?* (Autism, Physical Disabilities, Giftedness) This novel focuses on the lives of two Jewish families, one including an autistic boy and his academically gifted sister, the other featuring a bully who suffers a severe spine injury in a diving accident and is paralyzed from the waist down.

Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *Probably Still Nick Swansen* (Learning Disabilities) Sixteen-year-old Nick has a learning disability and struggles to endure life in which the other kids make fun of him. He has to take special classes, his date for the prom makes an excuse not to go out with him, and he is not sure about his place in the world.

## FOR ADULTS

Abrams, Charlotte. *The Silents* (Deafness) Charlotte writes her autobiography about day-to-day life with her deaf parents. She describes the communication challenges they faced as a Jewish family overcoming the Depression and the hardships of World War II, as well as the additional challenge and fear the mother faced when she found out she was going blind.

Nolan, Christopher. *Under the Eye of the Clock: The Life Story of Christopher Nolan* (Cerebral Palsy) The author, a 21-year-old Irishman severely disabled by cerebral palsy, tells the story of his childhood and how he must cope with his disability, revealing the thoughts and realities of his world.

Panzarino, Connie. *The Me in the Mirror* (Physical Disabilities) Connie Panzarino is a woman with Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type III. She tells of her struggles and triumphs, relationships with family, her turn to lesbianism, and her pioneering work in the disability rights movement.

Vaz, A. McDonald. *The Doctor He Begged to Be* (Reading Disability, Dyslexia, Learning Disability) Garth Vaz is a Jamaican man with dyslexia who wanted to be a physician. His brother tells of Garth's struggles during his two attempts at the University of Florida College of Medicine, and the challenges he faced including neurological, physical, financial, marital, and racial obstacles.

