



Ways into Understanding

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A selection of books about children with special needs.

The handicapped child is an ordinary child who may need special help in some things including reading books and library use. But the 'ordinary' child who is not handicapped in the usual sense is handicapped by society's view of disability. This selection of books *about* a handicapped child offers the view that the handicapped child is a normal person with a particular need. Through fiction and non-fiction these books present an awareness of the problems of handicap while indicating that the child plays a part in society and shares the joys and sorrows, fears and hopes common to all children. They provide an all too rare opportunity for the handicapped children to find themselves in books and for 'ordinary' children to develop empathy and understanding.

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I Can't Talk Like You

Althea, ill. Isabel Pearce, Dinosaur (1982), 0 85122 344 4, £1.25 pbk 0 85122 345 1, £2.95 hbk

One in the extensive Talk it Over series intended to provide opportunities for adults and children to discuss what they know and feel about different things and situations.

The titles dealing with handicap are first person accounts of a child's experience and contain useful information and explanation about the nature of particular handicaps as well as showing the child's feelings and point of view. This title, produced with the help of the Association for all Speech Impaired Children, deals with a child who has difficulty with speech and remembering things. (32pp 5-10)

(See also **I Have Asthma, I Use a Wheelchair, I Have Diabetes, I Wear a Hearing Aid, I Have Epilepsy and I Can't Hear Like You**, out this month in paperback only.)

Rachel

Elizabeth Fanshawe, ill. Michael Charlton Bodley Head (1975), 0 370 10783 7, £3.50

One of the first of the Bodley Head series of small full colour picture books designed to encourage understanding and integration of children with special needs. Here Rachel is seen living a life *very* like that of her friends; and at home and at school we see her playing, learning, helping. The only difference is that Rachel is in a wheelchair. (32pp 5-8)

Other titles in the same series:

The Boy Who Couldn't Hear

Freddy Bloom, ill. Michael Charlton (1977), 0 370 01811 7, £3.25

Children's reactions to Mark, born profoundly deaf. (32pp 5-8)

Ben

Victoria Shennan, ill. Michael Charlton (1980), 0 370 30300 8, £3.25

Shows Ben who has Down's Syndrome enjoying what other children enjoy with the help of his understanding family, friends and teachers. (32pp 5-8)

Suzy

Elizabeth Chapman, ill. Margery Gill (1981), 0 370 30375 X, £3.95

In slightly larger format and with text set in large print. Suzy who is partially-sighted gets involved in lots of different activities. (32pp 5-8)

Mike

Margaret Marshall, ill. Lorraine Spiro (1983), 0 370 30934 0, £3.95

Also in the larger format. Mike, who is about nine, and his family are anxious about his bed-wetting. Problems, aids, attitudes and possible solutions are included. (32pp 7-12)

Anna

Margaret Wadhams, ill. Michael Charlton (1985), 0 370 30612 0, £5.95 (October 1985)

Deals (in slightly larger format again) with children suffering abnormal skin conditions. Anna has eczema and Mandy has psoriasis. (32pp 7-12)

My Special Playgroup

Pamela Dowling, photography Angela Lloyd-Thomas Hamish Hamilton (1985), 0 241 11534 5, £3.95

An account in colour photographs and short text of a playgroup where handicapped and non-handicapped children play and learn together. (32pp 5+)

Claire and Emma

Diana Peter, A & C Black (1976), 0 7136 1631 8, £3.95

One of a series of books using colour photographs to illustrate children living and coping with different handicaps.

Claire and Emma, two deaf children, are seen enjoying life, using hearing aids and lip reading, while behaving like other girls. (24pp 6-10)

In the same series:

Janet at School

Paul White, (1978), 0 7136 1821 3, £3.95

Born with spina bifida Janet spends much of her life in a wheelchair but she takes a full part in school life and learning. (24pp 6-10)

Don't Forget Tom

Hanne Larsen, (1974), 0 7316 1483 8, £3.95

A day in the life of Tom who is mentally handicapped. (24pp 6+)

Sally Can't See

Palle Petersen, (1976), 0 7136 1661 X, £3.95

A day with Sally who is blind but can do a great many things. (24pp 6+)

Tim Walks

Rachel Anderson, CIO Publishing (1985), 0 7151 0422 5, £1.65

The story of 12 year old mentally handicapped Tim who learns how to walk to school instead of travelling on the special school bus. (28pp 8-14)

The Four of Us

Elisabeth Beresford, Hutchinson (1981), 0 09 144760 7, £4.95

Three children, one of whom is mentally handicapped, and a delightfully anti-ageist old man help to save the pier and theatre in their seaside town. (110pp 8-12)

Buttons: the dog who was more than a friend

Linda Yeatman, ill. Sir Hugh Casson Piccadilly Press (1985), 0 946826 95 1, £4.95

The story of a puppy living with profoundly deaf Philip and his family, tells of getting lost, being taken to an animal shelter and finally being trained as a Hearing Dog for the deaf. A surprise ending will satisfy the reader's emotions and need for information. Some of the proceeds of the sales of this book go to training a Hearing Dog. (53pp 8-10)

Alexander in Trouble

Susan Burke Bodley Head Acorn series (1979) 0 370 30143 9 £3.50

The only difference between Alexander and the other boys is that he is in a wheelchair. Otherwise he goes to the same school and gets into the same sort of trouble. Six funny stories from Australia (62pp 9-12)

Mark's Wheelchair Adventures

Camilla Jessel, Methuen (1975), 0 416 86190 8, £4.50

Mark moves to a new area and the children there eventually make friends after doubts about his disability, spina bifida, and his wheelchair. Illustrated throughout with Camilla Jessel's perceptive photographs. (64pp 9-14)

What Difference Does it Make, Danny?

Helen Young, ill. Quentin Blake Deutsch (1980), 0 233 97248 X, £4.95 Fontana Lions, 0 00 672219 9, £1.00

Danny is an ordinary boy, but one who has epilepsy. Banned from swimming by the new sports teacher Danny retaliates by being naughty until an event causes the adults to realise that he must be treated like anyone else. Information about epilepsy is woven into the story very effectively. (93pp 9-14)

Welcome Home Jellybean

Marlene Fanta Shyer, Collins Cascades, 0 00 330018 8, £1.65

The story of an institutionalised mentally handicapped girl brought home to live with her parents and brother. Sensitively and amusingly seen through the eyes of the brother. (12+)

Let the Balloon Go

Ivan Southall, Puffin, 0 14 03 0513 0 95p

Twelve year old John has cerebral palsy and resents being treated like a baby. His family learn to give him freedom. (112pp 9-14)

Head Over Heels

Hamish Hamilton (1979) op

After teenaged Terry becomes a quadraplegic in a road accident he and his family and friends come to terms with the problems and opportunities. (186pp 12+)

I Can Jump Puddles

Alan Marshall, Puffin (1974), 0 14 03.1651 5, £1.50

Autobiography of a polio victim who overcame both the disability and other people's attitudes to him. (128pp 13+)

What About Me?

Colby Rodowsk, Franklin Watts (1977), op

A teenage girl is jealous of all the attention needed by her brother who has Down's Syndrome. Her cry for help is the theme of the novel. (136pp 13+)

Sweet Frannie

Susan Sallis, Heinemann (1981), 0 434 96165 5, £4.95 Puffin (1983), 014 03.1570 5, £1.25

Teenage Fran goes to live in a residential home for paraplegic people. Her insistence in maintaining her independence in the face of being institutionalised and her efforts to bring hope to a despairing boy there make a strong and readable story. (13+)

The October Child

Eleanor Spence OUP (1976), op

A novel about an Australian family coming to terms with the behaviour of Baby Carland and his subsequent growing up

into childhood where all are affected by his autism. (13+)*

Title selections for this feature by Margaret Marshall.

Books currently out of print should be available in libraries.

For more information on books about and featuring handicapped children:

Count Me In, YLG Publications No 23, 1981, £1.00 inc. p&p.

Available from Maggie Norwood, c/o Central Children's Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ.

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