Living with Special Needs
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David & Lorraine Cheng Library, William Paterson University
Curriculum Materials Center

This is an annotated list of books written for children from preschool through high school about people with special needs. Some titles are winners of the Schneider Family Book Awards, that honor an author or illustrator whose books personify creative portrayals of special needs individuals.

General:

Shows children living with Spina Bifida, Down syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and blindness with the help of family and friends.
Call Number: j362.4 Dwi

Focuses on people who are different and suggest ways to interact with them.
Call Number: j362.408 Rog

A second-grader named Cindy is assigned to spend part of each day in a class and discovers that kids with special needs are all “just kids”.
Call Number: J Sen

Autism Spectrum Disorder:

Jason, a twelve-year-old autistic boy who wants to become a writer, relates what his life is like as he tries to make sense of his world. (Schneider Award).
Call Number: J Bas

A boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards’ families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.
Call Number: J Cho
A boy describes the many feelings he has about his brother Sammy who has autism.

**Call Number: PJ Edw**

Caitlin, who has Asperger’s Syndrome, struggles to understand emotions, show empathy, and make friends at school. While at home she seeks closure by working on a project with her father.

**Call Number: J Ers**

Frustrated at life with an autistic brother, Catherine longs for a normal existence but her world is further complicated by a friendship with a young paraplegic. (Schneider Award).

**Call Number: J Lor**

Struggling with Asperger’s, Rose shares a bond with her beloved dog, but when the dog goes missing during a storm, Rose is forced to confront the limits of her comfort levels. (Schneider Award).

**Call Number: J Mar**

Marcelo Sandoval, a boy on the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum, faces new challenges, including romance and injustice when he goes to work in the mailroom of his father’s corporate law firm. (Schneider Award).

**Call Number: J Sto**

**Children in Crisis:**

Foster McFee and her mother escape form her mother’s abusive boyfriend and end up in the small town of Culpepper, West Virginia, where they use their strengths and challenge themselves to build a new life. (Schneider Award).

**Call Number: J Bau**

Addie tries to cope with her mother’s erratic behavior and being separated from her beloved stepfather and half-sisters when she and her mother go to live in a small trailer. (Schneider Award).

**Call Number: J Con**
A lonely teenager exiled to a remote Vermont boarding school in the wake of a family tragedy must either surrender his sanity to the wild wolves inside his mind or learn that surviving means more than not dying.

**Call Number: J Kue**

Cathy Louise Fisher stops talking, partly because her father and brother never speak of her mother who died a year earlier, but visions of her mother, friendships with a homeless man and a disabled boy, and a huge dog ensure that she still communicates. (Schneider Award).

**Call Number: J Lea**

Hattie who turns twelve meets the mentally ill uncle she never knew, and becomes friends with a girl who works at the carnival.

**Call Number: J Mar**

Steve struggles to make sense of his mother’s terminal breast cancer and his brother’s suicide.

**Call Number: J Rap**

A younger sister has a difficult time adjusting to life after her older sister has a mental breakdown. Written as a series of poems.

**Call Number: j811.54 Son**

Jeffrey who is free of cancer, but not the fallout from the treatment, makes a deal with his friend Tad, his cancer survivor buddy, and a new friend Lindsay in preparation for eighth-grade graduation. (Schneider Award).

**Call Number: J Son**

**Communication/Language Disorders:**

This book is written to help teens solve some of the issues they experience while stuttering. Each chapter is written by a specialist in this field and some who have also stuttered themselves. A list of myths about stuttering is included.

**Call Number: j616.855 Doy**
When Cornelia’s mother runs off, leaving her with an eccentric aunt, Cornelia, a shy girl who stutters, must learn to share personal feelings and confront the truth about herself and her mother. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: J Fus**

The renowned cat conservationist reflects on his early childhood struggles with a speech disorder, describing how he only spoke fluently when he was communicating with animals. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: j333.95 Rab**

In Tanzania, Bernardi’s mute grandfather makes him a wonderful music box and then helps him realize his dream of owning a soccer ball and going to school.
**Call Number: PJ Stu**

When a boy takes over a friend’s newspaper route in Memphis, his debilitating stutter makes for a memorable month.
**Call Number: J Vaw**

**Hearing Impaired:**

Going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest requires superpowers! In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age.
**Call Number: j362.4 Bel**

Dumb is not the name Piper, a high school senior who’s deaf, would have chosen for a heavy metal band, yet she volunteers to manage this disparate group of would-be-musicians. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: J Joh**

Megan is sure that the “perfect” new girl dislikes her because she is deaf, but persistence and a joint science fair project help her to see what they have in common.
**Call Number: J Mat**
A boy named Moses and his schoolmates who are all deaf, attend a concert where the orchestra’s percussionist is also deaf. It also includes illustrations in sign language and a page showing the manual alphabet.
**Call Number:** PJ Mil

Lee, a jazz pianist, has to leave his band when he begins losing his hearing, but he meets a deaf saxophone player in a sign language class and together they form a snazzy new band. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number:** PJ See

Having lost his mother and his hearing in a short time, Ben leaves his Minnesota home to seek the father he never knew, and meets Rose who is also missing something from her life. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number:** J Sel

In Brooklyn, New York, in 1947, a boy learns about discrimination and tolerance as he and his deaf father share their enthusiasm over baseball and the Dodgers’ first baseman, Jackie Robinson. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number:** PJ Uhl

**Learning Disabilities:**

Abeel tells her own story of living with and overcoming dyscalculia, a math-related learning disability. She describes how her life was affected by her learning disability before and after she was diagnosed. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number:** j362.1 Abe

While the rest of the class makes birthday cards for the principal, Stanley struggles with his words and letters. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number:** PJ Ale

Gives a description of what learning disabilities are and how they are assessed, as well as providing advice for coping with them in school and in a career.
**Call Number:** j616.85 Bow
Esham, B., & Gordon, M. (2008). *If you’re so smart, how come you can’t spell Mississippi?* Perry Hall, MD: Mainstream Connections. (Grades 1-5).
Katie discovers her father is dyslexic, as is one of her classmates and she tries to make sense of it.
**Call Number: J Esh**

David Sheldon finds it difficult to pay attention and follow directions. His teacher had had enough of David’s brainstorms, but his brainstorms are his way to manage his wiggle fidgets.
**Call Number: J Esh**

Joey, who has ADHD, tries to keep his life from degenerating into total chaos when his mother sends him to be home-schooled with a hostile blind girl, his divorced parents cannot stop fighting, and his grandmother is dying of emphysema.
**Call Number: J Gan**

Alex has an inquiring mind and he wants to become an inventor like Thomas Edison. In school everything goes wrong but his parents help him by channeling his frustrations through his determination to not give up.
**Call Number: J Geh**

Despite his dyslexia and learning disabilities Chuck Close, an artist, achieved prominence for enormous, photographically realistic, black and white portraits of himself and his friends.
**Call Number: jB Clo**

A learning disabled boy, Max, and his physically disabled friend, Freak, find that when they combine forces they make a powerful team.
**Call Number: J Phi**

In the beginning Trisha loves school, but her difficulty learning to read makes her feel unable to do anything, until her fifth grade teacher helps her overcome this obstacle.
**Call Number: PJ Pol**
Physical Disabilities:

An African boy who cannot walk overcomes his fears and is rewarded for his bravery.
**Call Number: PJ Asa**

Two Latino boys experience carefree camaraderie despite one boy’s disability. Fun and friendship overpower physical limitations. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: PJ Ber**

Introduction to the life and work of artist Horace Pippin, describing his childhood love for drawing and the World War I injury that challenged his career. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: j759.13 Bry**

Born into a traveling gypsy family, Django Reinhardt taught himself guitar at an early age. He was soon acclaimed as the “Gypsy Genius” and “Prodigy Boy,” but one day his world changed when a fire claimed the use of his fretting hand. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: jB Reinhardt**

A boy’s wonderful mama takes him zooming everywhere with her, because her wheelchair is a zooming machine.
**Call Number: [Big Book] PJ Cow**

Princess Matilda, whose lame foot brings fear of the evil eye, has never given much thought to dragons but when a greedy cousin steals Tilda’s lands, the young princess goes on the run with two would-be dragon slayers. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: J Has**

A boy has a dream that he is being persecuted for being physically handicapped during the Nazi period in Germany.
**Call Number: J Jun**

Focuses on the challenges of being in a wheelchair, discussing why some people cannot walk and how those who use a wheelchair function at school, at home, in sports, and going to work.
**Call Number: j362.43 Kei**
A troubled youth with cerebral palsy struggles toward self-acceptance with the help of a drug addicted young woman.
**Call Number: J Koe**

Four students who develop a special bond with each other attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent their sixth-grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.
**Call Number: J Kon**

Kira, a lame orphaned child is mysteriously removed from her miserable village to a well-kept building, where she is expected to use her gifts as a weaver to do the bidding of the all-powerful Guardians.
**Call Number: J Low**

Wounded in Iraq while his Army unit is on convoy and treated for many months for traumatic brain injury, the first person Ben remembers from his earlier life is his autistic brother. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: J Maz**

Naomi who has speech problems and Owen who has physical disabilities have lived happily with their great-grandmother in her trailer for seven years. When their mother reappears to claim only Naomi, they run away to Mexico to find their father. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: J Rya**

Portrays the unexpected friendship between an African American teen with a juvenile record and a ten-year-old white girl with cerebral palsy. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: J Sac**

This book addresses the special issues that teens who have physical disabilities must tackle, such as school, relationships, sports and recreation, assistive technology, driving, preparing for life after high school.
**Call Number: J362.4 Tho**
Shawn McDaniel, who suffers from severe cerebral palsy, relates his perceptions of his life, his family, and his condition, especially as he believes his father is planning to kill him.

Call Number: J Tru

When a school bus accident leaves Jessica an amputee, she returns to school with a prosthetic limb and her track team finds a wonderful way to help rekindle her dream of running again. (Schneider Award).

Call Number: J Van

Young pilot Rose Justice is captured by Nazis and sent to Ravensbruck, the women’s concentration camp. She finds hope through the loyalty, bravery, and friendship of her fellow prisoners, who are victims of Nazi experiments. (Schneider Award).

Call Number: J Wei

Severe and Multiple Disabilities:

Helen Keller’s first nineteen months were much like those of any other child, everything changed when she suffered a horrible fever that left her both blind and deaf.

Call Number: jB Kel

Graduating from their schools special education program, Quincy and Biddy are placed together in their first independent apartment and discover unexpected things they have in common. (Schneider Award).

Call Number: J Gil

Carly learns a lot about Alex, her mentally disabled brother, as he trains for and competes in the Special Olympics.

Call Number: PJ Pul

Making friends with a developmentally disabled boy helps Kate learn that the two of them have a lot in common.
Emma and her father adjust their expectations when the newborn baby arrives with Down Syndrome.
**Call Number: PJ Stu**

A young boy named Charlie describes the activities he shares with his friend Isabelle, a girl with Down Syndrome.
**Call Number: PJ Wol**

**Visually Impaired:**

A twelve-year-old boy named Paul, fights for the right to play soccer, and despite his near blindness he slowly begins to remember the incident that damaged his eyesight.
**Call Number: J Blo**

With the help of Rosie’s grandmother, she manages to work out some problems in her relationship with her best friend, Bailey, who is blind.
**Call Number: J Cre**

Ginny’s eyes play tricks and, in her world, there is two of everything making kindergarten activities a challenge. Wearing an eye patch turns her into the pirate of kindergarten and glasses bring her world into focus. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: PJ Lyo**

The story of young Art Tatum, who became one of the all-time greats of jazz piano despite being nearly blind. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: jB Tatum**

Davey, a blind student, refuses all help from his new classmates, until they find a way to help him without doing everything for him. Based on an actual occurrence, this book will aid children in understanding some of the attributes of being blind.
**Call Number: PJ Pet**
Stories of the author’s Choctaw Indian family, centering particularly on his blind grandmother. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: j973.04 Tin**

**Other Disabilities:**

In an attempt to find a cure after being diagnosed with Creutzfeldt-Jacob’s (aka Mad Cow) disease, Cameron Smith, a disaffected sixteen-year-old boy, sets off on a road trip with a death-obsessed video gaming dwarf he meets in the hospital.
**Call Number: J Bra**

Plagued by Tourette’s syndrome and a stepfather who despises him, Sam meets an old man in his small Minnesota town who sends him on a road trip designed to help him discover the truth about his life. (Schneider Award).
**Call Number: J Fri**

A father tells outlandish stories while trying to get his young son, with a Sensory Processing disorder that makes him a very picky eater, to eat foods he thinks he will not like.
**Call Number: J Sch**

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July 2015