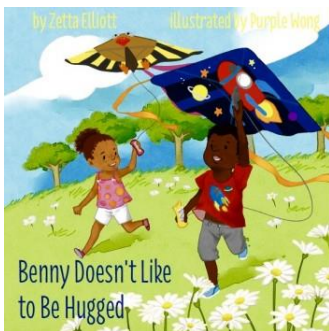


Representations of Autism in Children's Picture Books

Curated by Cara Byrne, PhD

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Below is an attempt to curate a list of picture books that speak both to children with Autism and to their family and friends. Many of the books celebrate the gifts and unique perspectives of those with Autism, though they also explore the challenges as well. Unfortunately, non-neurotypical children are underrepresented in the children's literature genre. However, more and more authors and illustrators are exploring inclusive themes and perspectives as part of the #WeNeedDiverseBooks movement, which is why many of these titles have been published in the last 4 years.

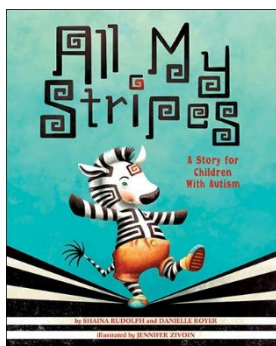
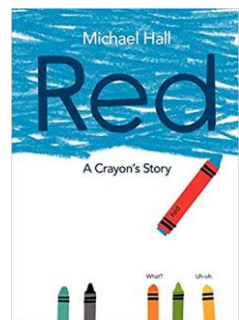


Benny Doesn't Like to be Hugged (2017) Written by Zetta Elliot & Illustrated by Purple Wong

Told from the first-person perspective of Benny's unnamed friend, this picture book helps children recognize and accept differences – whether in eating habits, communication styles or preferences. With its simple sentences and rich, colorful illustrations, this picture book shows that friendship can grow and blossom even when two friends see the world differently.

Red: A Crayon's Story (2015) by Michael Hall

Red crayon tries to create red strawberries, fire engines, cherries, and hearts, but his work always comes out blue. The crayons around him try to help by correcting him, but it's not until a new friend asks him to make a blue ocean that the other crayons begin to celebrate what the crayon does well. While this book does not reference Autism, Red's struggles and eventual accomplishments speak to those who similarly may have difficulty finding acceptance and recognition.



All My Stripes: A Story for Children with Autism (2015)
Written by Shana Rudolph & Danielle Royer & Illustrated by Jennifer Zivoin

Zane the zebra has a tough day at school and wonders why all anyone sees is his Autism. His mama helps point out a number of his traits, including his honesty and curiosity, which make him the wonderful zebra that he is. Published by an imprint of the American Psychological Society, this book includes a reading guide and a reference list for parents and caregivers of children with Autism.

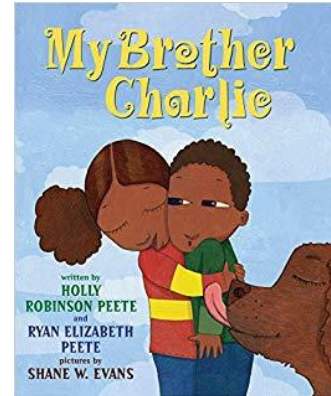


We're Amazing 1, 2, 3! (2017) Written by Leslie Kimmelman & Illustrated by Marybeth Nelson & Tom Brannon
(This book is available for free online or in a Golden Book format)

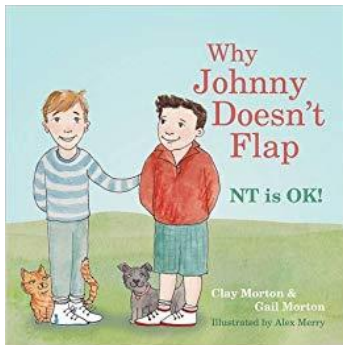
When Abby meets Julia, Elmo explains to Abby that Julia has Autism, which is why she does not immediately respond to Abby's questions, why she flaps her arms when she is excited, and why she is sensitive to sound. Julia was first introduced in 2015 as part of Sesame Street's "See Amazing in All Children" initiative. This Golden book is one of the best early readers that explores Autism for a preschool audience, whether they are already familiar with the Sesame Street characters or not.

My Brother Charlie (2010) Written by Holly Robinson Peete & Ryan Elizabeth Peete & Illustrated by Shane W. Evans

"Charlie has autism. But autism doesn't have Charlie. If you ever get to meet my brother, you'll feel lucky to be his friend." Callie loves her twin brother Charlie, even though he doesn't say he say "I love you" often. With colorful illustrations by Shane Evans, this semi-autobiographical book celebrates sibling bonds.



Why Johnny Doesn't Flap: NT is OK! (2016) Written by Clay & Gail Morton & Illustrated by Alex Merry



"When he talks to you, Johnny looks directly into your eyes, which can make you pretty uncomfortable. He doesn't mean any harm, though. That's just the way he is, and that's OK." This picture book presents Johnny, a NT (neurotypical) child who is friends with a little boy who explains how his friend lacks the characteristic traits of Autism. This picture book subverts more stereotypical representations of friendships between children with and without Autism in a clever way.

Additional Picture Books That May Be Of Interest:

- ***Ada Twist, Scientist*** (2016) Written by Andrea Beaty & Illustrated by David Roberts
- ***A Girl Like Tilly: Growing up with Autism*** (2017) By Helen Bates & Illustrated by Ellen Li
- ***Noah Chases the Wind*** (2015) By Michelle Worthington & Illustrated by Joseph Cowman
- ***Russell's World: A Story for Kids About Autism*** (2011) By Charles A. Amenta III & Illustrated by Monika Pollak
- ***Slug Days*** (2017) By Sara Leach & Illustrated by Rebecca Bender
- ***The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin*** (2017) By Julia Finley Mosca & Illustrated by Daniel Rieley
- ***Uniquely Wired: A Story about Autism and Its Gifts*** (2018) By Julia Cook & Illustrated by Anita DuFalla