

Delve Deeper into Swim Team

A film by Lara Stolman

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Susan Conlon of Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Swim Team*.

In Swim Team, parents of a boy on the autism spectrum form a competitive swim team, recruiting other teens on the spectrum and training them with high expectations and zero pity. Swim Team chronicles the extraordinary rise of three diverse young athletes, capturing a moving quest for inclusion, independence and a life that feels like winning.

ADULT NONFICTION

Donvan, John and Carol Zucker. *In a Different Key*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2016. Nearly seventy-five years ago, Donald Triplett of Forest, Mississippi became the first child diagnosed with autism. Beginning with his family's odyssey, this book tells the story of this often-misunderstood condition, and of the civil rights battles waged by the families of those who have it.

Grandin, Temple and Richard Panek. *The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across the Spectrum*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013. With her groundbreaking memoir *Thinking About Pictures*, Temple was the first person to describe what it was like to be inside the head of an autistic person. Now, in *The Autistic Brain*, she weaves her own history and experience into the narrative—hers was among the first diagnoses of autism—and takes us to the frontiers of neurological research on autism. Excitingly, scientists and self-advocates have begun to reveal the long-overlooked strengths of autism, and Grandin offers innovative, practical ways for parents, teachers, and employers to understand and embrace the unique advantages of people on the spectrum.

Morgan, Robert L. and Timothy J. Riesen. *Promoting Successful Transition to Adulthood for Students with Disabilities*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2016. This book presents clear guidelines for all aspects of team-based transition planning for individuals with various levels of disability, illustrated with vignettes of three secondary students who are followed throughout the book. The authors describe evidence-based practices for conducting assessments and promoting optimal outcomes in the areas of employment, postsecondary education, and independent living.

Prizant, Barry M. and Tom Fields-Meyer. *Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015. Autism therapy typically focuses on ridding individuals of "autistic" symptoms such as difficulties interacting socially, problems in communicating, sensory challenges, and repetitive behavior patterns. Now Dr. Barry M. Prizant offers a new and compelling paradigm: the most successful approaches to autism don't aim at fixing a person by eliminating symptoms, but rather seeking to understand the individual's experience and what underlies the behavior.

Robinson, John Elder. *Look Me In The Eye*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2007. A moving and darkly funny memoir of growing up with Asperger's at a time when the diagnosis simply didn't exist.

Silbermn, Steve. *Neuro Tribes*. New York: Avery Publishing, The Penguin Group, 2015. What is autism? A lifelong disability, or a naturally occurring form of cognitive difference akin to certain forms of genius? In truth, it is all of these things and more—and the future of our society depends on our understanding it. *Wired* reporter

Steve Silberman unearths the secret history of autism, long suppressed by the same clinicians who became famous for discovering it, and finds surprising answers to the crucial question of why the number of diagnoses has soared in recent years.

ADULT FICTION

Dicks, Matthey. *Memoirs of An Imaginary Friend*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012. Max is different from other children. Some people say he has Asperger's, but most just say he's "on the spectrum." None of this matters to Budo, who loves Max unconditionally and is charged with protecting him from the class bully, from awkward situations in the cafeteria, and even in the bathroom stalls. But he can't protect Max from Mrs. Patterson, a teacher in the Learning Center who believes that she alone is qualified to care for this young boy.

Genova, Lisa. *Love, Anthony*. New York: Gallery Books (Simon & Schuster), 2012. *New York Times* bestselling author and neuroscientist Lisa Genova offers a unique perspective in fiction—the extraordinary voice of Anthony, a nonverbal boy with autism. Anthony reveals a neurologically plausible peek inside the mind of autism, why he hates pronouns, why he loves swinging and the number three, how he experiences routine, joy, and love.

Gottlieb, Eli. *Best Boy*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W. W. Norton, 2015. Sent to a "therapeutic community" for autism at the age of eleven, Todd Aaron, now in his fifties, is the "Old Fox" of Payton LivingCenter. A joyous man who rereads the encyclopedia compulsively, he is unnerved by the sudden arrivals of a menacing new staffer and a disruptive, brain-injured roommate. His equilibrium is



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further worsened by Martine, a one-eyed new resident who has romantic intentions and convinces him to go off his meds to feel "normal" again.

Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. New York: Doubleday Books, 2003.

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow.

This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.

Moon, Elizabeth. *The Speed of Dark*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2013.

In the near future, disease will be a condition of the past. Most genetic defects will be removed at birth; the remaining during infancy. Lou Arrendale, a high-functioning autistic adult, is a member of the lost generation, born at the wrong time to reap the rewards of medical science. He lives a low-key, independent life. But then he is offered a chance to try a brand-new experimental "cure" for his condition. With this treatment Lou would think and act and *be* just like everyone else. But if he was suddenly free of autism, would he still be himself?

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Bojanowski, Brian and Jennifer Cook O'Toole. *The Asperkid's (secret) Book of Social Rules: The Handbook of Not-so-obvious Social Guidelines for Tweens and Teens with Asperger Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2013. The book offers witty insights

into baffling social codes such as making and keeping friends, and common conversation pitfalls. Ideal for all 10-17 year olds with Asperger syndrome, this book provides inside information on over thirty social rules helping Asperkids to navigate the mysterious world around them.

Higashida, Naoki. *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of A Thirteen-year-old Boy With Autism*. New York: Random House, 2013. Written

by Naoki Higashida, a very smart, very self-aware, and very charming thirteen-year-old boy with autism, it is a one-of-a-kind memoir that demonstrates how an autistic mind thinks, feels, perceives, and responds in ways few of us can imagine. Parents and family members who never thought they could get inside the head of their autistic loved one at last have a way to break through to the curious, subtle, and complex life within.

McHenry, Irene and Carol Moog. *The Autism Playbook For Teens*. Oakland, CA: Instant Help Books, an imprint of New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2014.

Teens with autism have the potential to be excellent actors. They are natural observers—able to study, imitate, and learn social behavior. *The Autism Playbook for Teens* is designed to bolster these strengths with mindfulness strategies and roleplaying scripts, while also helping teens reduce anxiety, manage emotions, be more aware in the present moment, and connect with others.

Squire, Ann. *Autism*. New York: Children's Press, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc.

Autism affects millions of people around the world by limiting their ability to communicate and interact socially with other people. Some face minor difficulties, while others are so severely affected that they require special assistance throughout their lives. Readers will find out what it is like to live

with autism, what causes this condition, how it is treated, and more.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Arnold, Elana K. *A Boy Called Bat*. New York: Walden Pond Press, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2017.

From acclaimed author Elana K. Arnold and with illustrations by Charles Santoso, *A Boy Called Bat* is the first book in a funny, heartfelt, and irresistible young middle grade series starring an unforgettable young boy on the autism spectrum.

Nappi, Frank. *The Legend of Mickey Tussler*. New York: Sky Pony Press, 2012.

In the late 1940s, the minor league Milwaukee Brewers are foundering yet again and manager Arthur Murphy is desperate. When he sees seventeen-year old Mickey Tussler throwing apples into a barrel, he knows he has found the next pitching phenom. But not everyone is so hopeful. Mickey's autism—a disorder still not truly understood even today—has alienated the boy from the world, and he is berated by other players and fans.

Peete, Holly Robinson, *My Brother Charlie*. illustrated by Shane Evans. New York: Scholastic Press, 2010.

A girl tells what it is like living with her twin brother who has autism and sometimes finds it hard to communicate with words, but who, in most ways, is just like any other boy. Picture Book.

Stork, Francisco X. *Marcelo in the Real World*. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books (an imprint of Scholastic, Inc.) 2009.

Marcelo Sandoval, a 17-year-old boy on the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum, faces new challenges, including romance and injustice, when he goes to work for his father in the mailroom of a corporate law firm.

