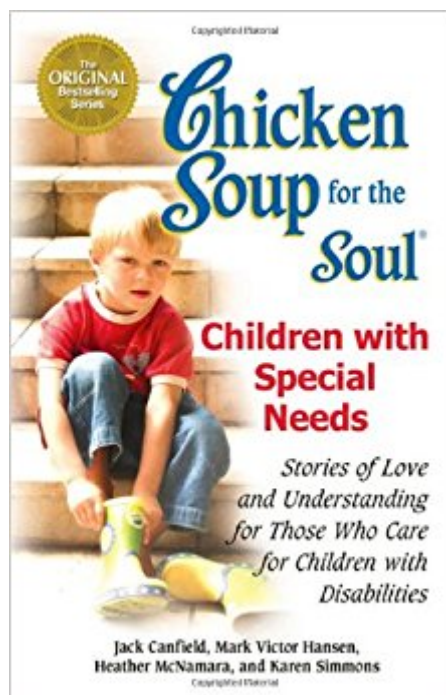




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Chicken Soup For The Soul: Children With Special Needs: Stories Of Love And Understanding For Those Who Care For Children With Disabilities



Synopsis

'These powerful heart-rending stories are filled with honesty, humor, hope and offer inspiration to parents, teachers, and anyone else who cares for children with special needs. By embracing the magnificence, inner peace, and beauty each child possess, our own attitudes are shifted from despair to promise.' —Gerold G Jampolsky, M.D., Founder of International Center of Attitudinal Healing, Sausalito, California

Raising a child with special needs is a lifelong commitment that is as unique as each person who embarks on it. Written by a variety of authors who share in this distinctive relationship, *Chicken Soup for the Soul Children with Special Needs* offers a glimpse into the lives of others who are on a similar path. These stories provide insight, comfort, and connection with others who have walked this powerful and transformational journey. The authors of these candid stories relate their own experiences of adjusting, reaching out, and flourishing and share their universal worries, their tears, and the laughter that come with this extraordinary relationship. Most important, through these stories, you will be guided with the wisdom of fellow parents, caregivers, and those with special needs to help you be the very best parent or caregiver you can be.

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Customer Reviews

Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen are co-creators of the national bestselling *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. Mark Victor Hansen and Jack Canfield are co-creators of the national bestselling *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. Heather McNamara has worked with the *Chicken Soup* family

since 1995, coauthoring several titles including *Chicken Soup for the Unsinkable Soul* and *Chicken Soup for Every Mom's Soul*. Karen Simmons, a mother of two children who have special needs, is an award-winning author, public speaker, and founder of Autism Today, the largest online autism resource. Together, McNamara and Simmons host www.soulsupporter.com, an information and support group for mothers and caregivers of children with special needs.

The Voice of Reason Wears SpongeBob Underpants In the book of life, the answers are not in the back. Charlie Brown 'Oh, my child will never behave like that in public,' I remember smugly telling a friend over lunch one day. 'I simply won't allow it.' Seven months pregnant with my first baby, I watched in horror as a preschool-aged girl screamed, kicked, and flailed while her humiliated mother tried to drag her away from the play area and out the door. 'I tell you, I'll never let a three-year-old run my life!' I smirked as we got back to our discussion of nursery themes. Looking back, I seemed to have all the answers regarding child rearing before I ever had one of my own: when and what they should eat, the proper cartoons to watch, which toys they should be playing with, the best way to potty-train. If it concerned children, this expectant mother had an opinion about all the 'right' ways to do things, and shame on anyone who disagreed! So sure was I that badly behaved children were the direct result of bad parenting that nothing short of a whack over the head could have convinced me otherwise. And, as karma would have it, that whack occurred late one night in June 2003 in the form of a four-pound, nine-ounce screeching baby boy. Difficult from the beginning, little Antoine was determined to put our fledgling parenting skills to the test. I was committed to nursing him, but he refused to latch on. Gastrointestinal problems meant that the milk I spent so much time pumping almost always came back up. He screamed, sometimes for hours on end, for no apparent reason. He stared, not at us, but at a bright light on the ceiling. And the child never ever slept, which meant, of course, that neither did we. As time went on, his behavior became even more challenging, and sometime around his first birthday we stopped taking him to public places altogether unless we simply had no other choice. His unpredictability and his 'nuclear meltdowns' in the supermarket, for example, more often than not had me terrified that one of my fellow shoppers would summon the police. Gone were the days of enjoying restaurant meals as a family, as even a fast-food experience with Antoine was likely to deteriorate into a chaotic scene. In fact, a trip outside our home for any reason typically meant enduring finger-pointing, cold stares, and rude comments from perfect strangers as Antoine, oblivious to his surroundings, carried on as though he were being prodded with hot pokers. 'Can't you control your child?' 'Ma'am, if he doesn't quiet down, I'm going to have to ask you to leave,' 'Spoiled brat,' or 'Give him to me for a few days,

I'll straighten him out!' came my way so often that I began to categorize my days by the number of insults I received from people who knew absolutely nothing about me or my child. Worst of all was the 'advice' we received from friends and family whenever we attempted to voice our concerns that something wasn't quite right with our little boy. Some tried to reassure us, claiming that perhaps the 'terrible twos' had set in a bit early, that tantrums were normal, and that he'd settle down once he got older. 'He's just all boy,' some said. Others gently pointed out that he would behave better if we could simply learn to show him 'who's boss,' while still others were competitive: 'Oh, you think he's bad, you should see my Brian.' How on Earth could we possibly explain what it was like to live with this whirling dervish, this Tasmanian devil of a boy to people who clearly thought that children came in a one-size-fits-all model? And who was to say that they weren't right? As first-time parents, what did we know? After all, no one had ever told us that raising kids was easy. What we did know was that the level of stress in our household (already at an incomprehensible high from trying to meet the day-to-day needs of a child who alternated between ramming his head into the armoire and spending hours at a time lining his toy cars into neat little rows) was made even higher by the large amount of seemingly thoughtless commentary we received, no matter which way we turned. Indeed, it was commentary of the very type I had made myself once upon a time. When Antoine's diagnosis of autism was eventually confirmed, we—like most parents confronted with the disorder—were devastated. At the same time, the sense of relief was profound. Knowing that there was a reason behind our child's erratic behavior and that we weren't crazy after all gave us the strength to go on when it seemed like our whole world was falling apart. These days, Antoine has more good days than bad. At three and a half, he is the light of my life and has taught me more about myself than I could have imagined possible. He still does not make transitions well, and, though fewer and farther between, his meltdowns can still be considered 'nuclear' by anyone's standards. That much has not changed. What has changed is my own ability to empathize, to put myself into the shoes of another. Never again will I be so quick to make judgments. These days, thanks to knowing and loving my amazing little boy, if I say anything at all, it is this: How can I help?

Shari Youngblood
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I got this book for my best friend who is a special education teacher and after I received it, I skimmed through some of it and became enthralled in reading it. The stories were so inspirational and offered a glimpse into the world of children with special needs and their families and also offers hope to them and lets them know there are others who deal with the same challenges and celebrations. As someone without firsthand experiences with special needs children, I was very moved and inspired. This is a wonderful book!

Very sweet little book. I bought this as a secret santa gift for a friend. We're all studying to be speech paths, so I thought this was really fitting. She loved it, and I totally want a copy for myself now! Definitely a great buy for special ed teachers, parents with special needs kids, any sort of therapist, or just anyone that loves kids in general. Very moving and some are quite funny/cute.

none

This book is so encouraging and offers just the right thing at just the right time, it seems. I like to pull it out when I'm having a down day and it always brightens my mood. It does have some of the same stories as "A Special Kind of Love," so that was kind of repetitive.

The stories in this book reminded me of so many people that I've known in my years of supporting people with developmental disabilities. There is no pity here. There is so much joy in the little things that become big things. These are the people who don't let their disabilities define them, and who don't let their diagnoses limit them. I thoroughly enjoyed their stories.

Wonderful book! I love that the beginning starts with the story Welcome to Holland. I have a daughter with special needs and reading Welcome to Holland expresses what having a child with special needs can be like. My daughter is such a beautiful blessing to our family and a spot of sunshine to all who meet her. You could be having the worst day and a smile from her will turn you around. You can't help but smile back. I would recommend this to anyone who has a child with special needs no matter what the age. It will inspire you. To any one who knows someone, is friends with someone, loves someone or cares for someone with special needs you will be inspired and touched reading the wonderful stories.

I have a child with Septo Optic Dysplasia and at times you feel overwhelmed, alone, sad, mad,

frustrated, happy, fearful the list of emotions goes on and on! This book made me laugh and cry. It also made me feel like it's ok to feel sad sometimes and that all parents with special needs children go through this. This book also shows the joy of having a special child. Another book I would recommend is Raising the spirited Child.

To be honest, I ordered this book because I was an invited reviewer when the stories were being selected. I had always wondered if our names were included at the end; they are not. That's OK, though - the book targets a diverse audience with its typical stories of humor, love, courage, sadness, and victory. Kids, family members, educators, and assorted care-givers with intriguing, refreshing insights into amazing situations make this book another winner.

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