



National Association of Professionals
concerned with Language Impairment in Children

For many families of a child who has autism, life has been both very difficult and very different from the one that they had expected. In this moving book, Dr. Barbara Firestone...has tried to capture the experiences of 38 families from the time of diagnosis to adulthood. She has done so to allow other families the benefit of this experience.

Autism Heroes is easy to read and beautifully illustrated. It is a fascinating collection of parents' accounts of their child's development, educational and social experiences. The children's needs are wide ranging in terms of the autism spectrum.

Each family story is fairly brief but conveys the central aspects of the experience of autism for them. Unsurprisingly there are recurring themes. These include the importance of diagnosis and high quality early intervention, and the ongoing struggles with their own denial and in finding professional expertise.

The stories reveal that relationships with education and therapy services have been very positive for some families. For others, lack of appropriate educational provision has had very significant consequences for their child and family life. As a result some families have moved to other areas of the US with established expertise, or have even formed their own school.

Other themes include balancing family life with efforts to obtain good support services.

All of these themes will be very familiar to families and professionals in Britain.

Some stories contain beautifully worded descriptions by parents of how autism affects their son or daughter in terms of everyday living, self-confidence and friendships.

The language in this book reflects American culture and feelings are freely expressed. Many families may find this of great support.

Autism Heroes would be a valuable resource for parent support group libraries and is very well priced. Students and therapists who work in this field may find this book encourages reflection about the nature of autism and how to support young people and families.

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