

# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Neurological Diversity Through the Reading of Novels (Intermediate)

## Note:

The interest and reading levels listed in this bibliography are those given by the publishers. If the reviewing journals gave a different interest level(s) for a title then this was indicated after the publisher's interest level. I find the interest levels given by the reviewing journals to be more accurate.

The summaries, which are also from the publishers, are to give you a quick overview of each title. Note that some of the titles fit the theme loosely and others more tightly. The titles also range from "light-hearted" to more serious in nature.

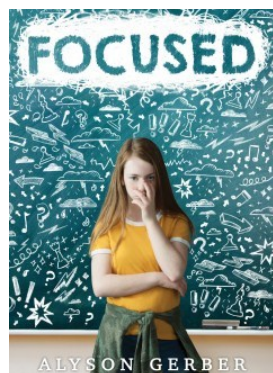
If a student needs the support of a digital copy, talk with your Learning Support Teacher, as ARC-BC is able to "rush" order digital titles they don't currently have in their collection. A very small number of the titles may also be available in an audiobook format, accessible through searching in Destiny. Your Teacher-Librarian can help you check for this.

If the LRC has 10+ copies of a title this was listed beside the title to provide you with the further flexibility of bringing in some titles to be used in a lit circle format.

*Joan Pearce, April 2024*

# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Neurological Diversity (Intermediate)

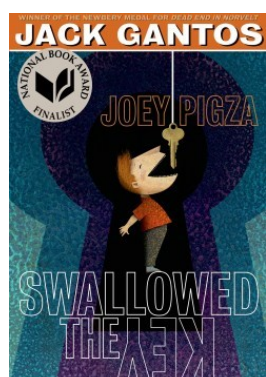
Compiled by Joan Pearce  
Novels



## **Focused** \*LRC ordered 12

by Alyson Gerber, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.6)

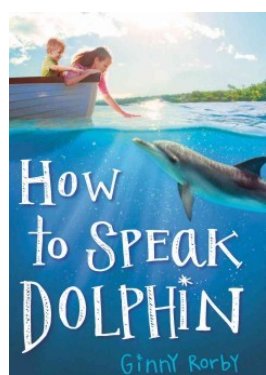
"Twelve-year-old Clea wants to do her homework, follow instructions, pay attention in school, and play chess on the school team, but somehow she cannot focus on whatever is in front of her, and the other kids at school are starting to notice and make fun of her; when her worried parents take her to be tested she finds out that she has ADHD (only without the hyperactivity)-- and with help from the psychiatrist who seems to really understand her she is determined to learn..." - Follett



## **Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key** \*LRC has 12

by Jack Gantos, c2014 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.2)

"To the constant disappointment of his mother and his teachers, Joey has trouble paying attention or controlling his mood swings when his prescription meds wear off and he starts getting worked up and acting wired." - Follett



## **How to Speak Dolphin**

by Ginny Rorby, c2015 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.7)

"Since her mother died, twelve-year-old Lily has struggled to care for her severely autistic half-brother, Adam, in their Miami home, but she is frustrated and angry because her oncologist step-father, Don, expects her to devote her time to Adam, and is unwilling to admit that Adam needs professional help—but when Adam bonds with a young dolphin with cancer Lily is confronted with another dilemma: her family or the dolphin's freedom." - Follett



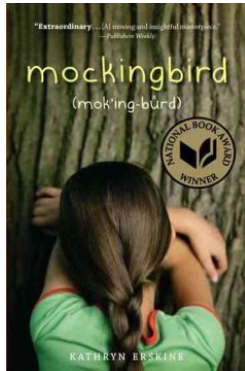
## **Planet Earth is Blue**

by Nicole Panteleakos, c2020 (IL: 3-6)

"Twelve-year-old Nova is eagerly awaiting the launch of the space shuttle Challenger—it's the first time a teacher is going into space, and kids across America will watch the event on live TV in their classrooms. Nova and her big sister, Bridget, share a love of astronomy and the space program. They planned to watch the launch together. But Bridget has disappeared, and Nova is in a new foster home." - Pub.

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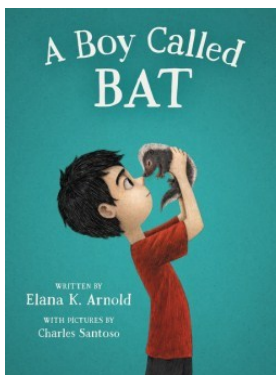


## Mockingbird

by Kathryn Erskine, c2010 (IL: 5-8, RL: 3.6)

"Ten-year-old 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."

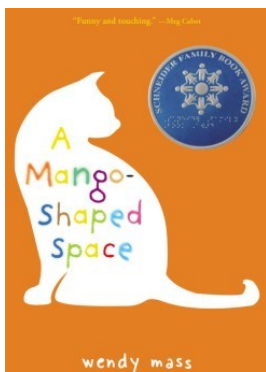
- Follett



## A Boy Called Bat

by Elana K. Arnold, c2017 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.6)

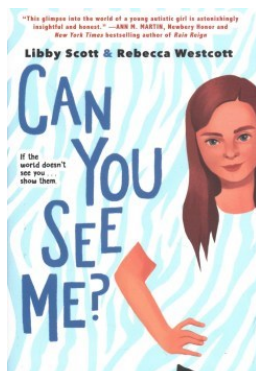
"When his veterinarian mom brings home a stray baby skunk that needs rehabilitation before it can be placed in a wild animal shelter, Bat, who has autism, resolves to prove that he is up to the challenge of caring for the skunk permanently." - Follett



## A Mango-Shaped Space

by Wendy Mass, c2003 (IL: 5-8, RL: 6.8)

"Afraid that she is crazy, thirteen-year-old Mia, who sees a special color with every letter, number, and sound, keeps this a secret until she becomes overwhelmed by school, changing relationships, and the death of her beloved cat, Mango." - Follett



## Can You See Me?

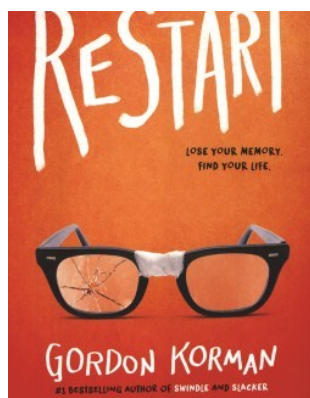
by Libby Scott, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.6)

"Eleven-year-old Tally is starting sixth grade at Kingwood Academy and she really wants to fit in, which means somehow hiding her autism, hypersensitivity to touch, and true self, and trying to act "normal" like her former best friend, Layla, who is distancing herself from Tally and her fourteen-year-old sister, Nell, who is always angry with Tally for being different; but as she records her thoughts and anxieties in her coping diary, Tally begins to wonder—what is "normal" anyway?" - Follett



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**Restart** \*LRC has 24  
by Gordon Korman, c2017 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.1)

"Chase does not remember falling off the roof, in fact he does not remember anything about himself, and when he gets back to middle school he begins to learn who he was through the reactions of the other kids--trouble is, he really is not sure he likes the Chase that is being revealed, but can he take the opportunity amnesia has provided and restart his life?" - Follett



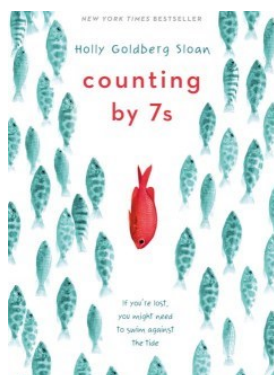
**The Unteachables** \*LRC has 12  
by Gordon Korman c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.1)

"The Unteachables' never thought they'd find a teacher who had a worse attitude than they did. And Mr. Kermit never thought he would actually care about teaching again. Over the course of a school year, though, room 117 will experience mayhem, destruction—and maybe even a shot at redemption." - Follett



**Ungifted** \*LRC has 24  
by Gordon Korman, c2012 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.2)

"When Donovan Curtis pulls a major prank at his middle school, he thinks he's finally gone too far. But thanks to a mix-up by one of the administrators, instead of getting in trouble, Donovan is sent to the Academy of Scholastic Distinction, a special program for gifted and talented students... But as the students and teachers of ASD grow to realize that Donovan may not be good at math or science (or just about anything), he shows that his gifts may be exactly what the ASD students never knew they needed." - Pub.



**Counting by 7s** \*LRC has 12  
by Holly Goldberg Sloan, c2013 (IL: 5-8, RL 5.3)

"Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life . . . until now. Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world." - Pub.

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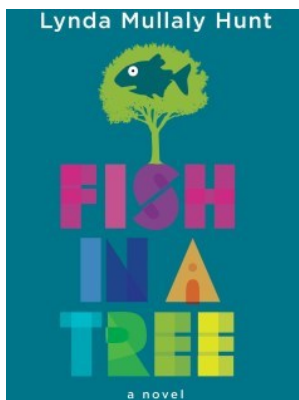
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Novels



## Not If I Can Help It

by Carolyn Mackler, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.4)

"Willa lives on the upper West Side of Manhattan with her divorced father and her younger brother and attends fifth grade with her best friend Ruby, and she likes things to be a certain way, because it makes life manageable even with her Sensory Processing Disorder; she certainly does not like surprises, and her father has just thrown her a big one: he has been dating Ruby's mother, and suddenly Willa's life seems to be spiraling out of her control—and part of the trouble is that she cannot even explain why she thinks this is a horrible idea, when everyone else thinks that it is wonderful." - Follett



## Fish In a Tree \*LRC has 11

by Lynda Mullaly Hunt, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.2)

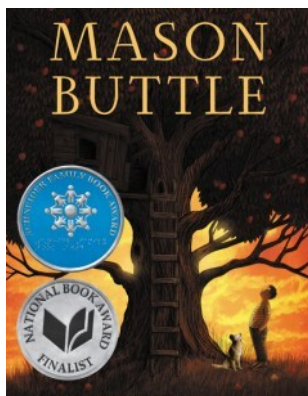
"'Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid.'" Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright..." - Amazon.ca



## Here in the Real World

by Sara Pennypacker, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.1)

"Ware can't wait to spend summer 'off in his own world' - dreaming of medieval knights and generally being left alone. But then his parents sign him up for dreaded Rec camp, where he must endure meaningful social interaction and whatever activities so-call 'normal' kids do..." - Follett



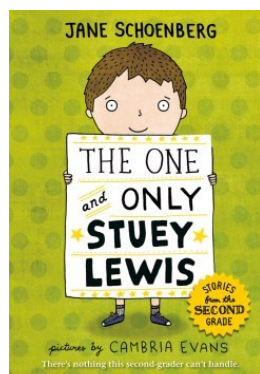
## The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle

by Leslie Connor, c2018 (IL: 3-6, RL: 2.7?)

"Mason Buttle is the biggest, sweatiest kid in his grade, and everyone knows he can barely read or write. Mason's learning disabilities are compounded by grief. Fifteen months ago, Mason's best friend, Benny Kilmartin, turned up dead in the Buttle family's orchard. An investigation drags on, and Mason, honest as the day is long, can't understand why Lieutenant Baird won't believe the story Mason has told about that day. Both Mason and his new friend, tiny Calvin Chumsky, are relentlessly bullied by the other boys in their neighborhood, so they create." - Follett

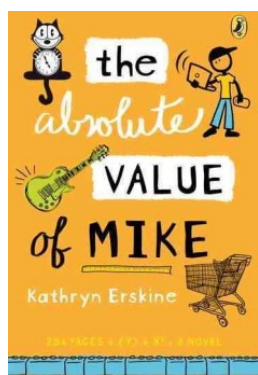
# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Neurological Diversity (Intermediate)

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Novels



**The One and Only Stuey Lewis** \*LRC has 12  
by Jane Schoenberg, c2011 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.9)

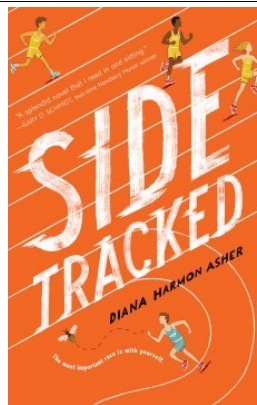
"Stuey Lewis faces many challenges in the second grade, but while he struggles with reading, Stuey manages to pull off a great Halloween caper and joins the soccer team." - Follett



**The Absolute Value of Mike**

by Kathryn Erskine, c2011 (IL:5-8, RL: 3.5)

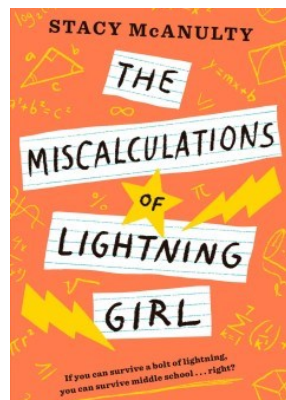
"Mike, a fourteen-year-old boy with a math learning disability, is sent to rural Pennsylvania for the summer to work on an engineering project, and while his plans to impress his mathematician father fall flat when Mike discovers the project has nothing to do with engineering, he learns much more valuable lessons while working with his eccentric, elderly aunt, a homeless man, and a punk rock girl as part of a town-wide effort to adopt a Romanian orphan." - Follett



**Sidetracked**

by Diana Harmon Asher, c2017 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.4)

"Seventh-grader Joseph Friedman is friendless and puny, with ADD to boot. He spends most of his time avoiding the class bully and hiding out in the Resource Room. But the Resource Room teacher encourages (i.e., practically forces) him to join the school cross country team, and he meets Heather, a new student who's tough and athletic and refuses to be pushed around by anybody." - Pub.



**The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl** \*LRC has 12

by Stacy McAnulty, c2018 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 3.7)

"A lightning strike made Lucy, twelve, a math genius but, after years of homeschooling, her grandmother enrolls her in middle school and she learns that life is more than numbers." - Follett



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## Rain Reign

by Ann Martin, c2014 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 4.3)

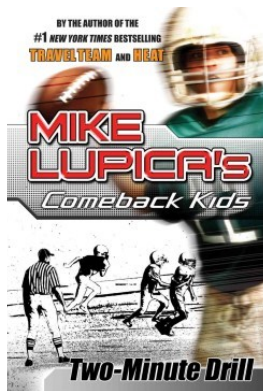
"Struggling with Asperger's syndrome, Rose shares a bond with her beloved dog, but when the dog goes missing during a storm, Rose is forced to confront the limits of her comfort levels, even if it means leaving her routines in order to search for her pet." - Follett



## Absolutely Almost

by Lisa Graff, c2015 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 4.7)

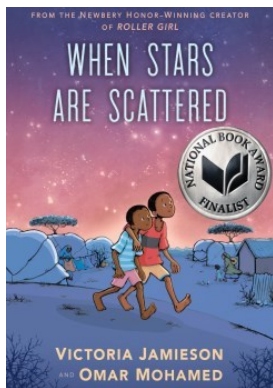
"Ten-year-old Albie has never been the smartest, tallest, best at gym, greatest artist, or most musical in his class, as his parents keep reminding him, but new nanny, Calista, helps him uncover his strengths and take pride in himself." - Follett



## Two-Minute Drill

by Mike Lupica, c2007 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 5.1)

"Chris Conlan is the coolest kid in sixth grade—the golden-armed quarterback of the football team, and the boy all the others look up to. Scott Parry is the new kid, the boy with the huge brain, but with feet that trip over themselves daily. These two boys may seem like an odd couple, but each has a secret that draws them together as friends, and proves that the will to succeed is even more important than raw talent." - Pub.



## When Stars are Scattered

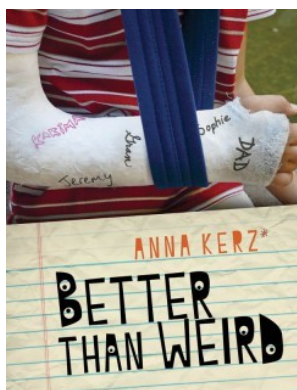
by Victoria Jamieson, c2010 (IL: 5-8, 4-8, 6-8)

\*LRC has 12

"Omar and his younger brother Hassan live in a refugee camp, and when an opportunity for Omar to get an education comes along, he must decide between going to school every day or caring for his nonverbal brother in this intimate and touching portrayal of family and daily life in a refugee camp." - Pub.

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## **Better than Weird**

by Anna Kerz, c2011 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 3.6)

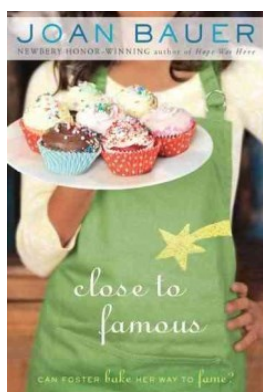
"Aaron is anxiously waiting for his father to return for the first time since Aaron's mother's death eight years earlier. Aaron works hard with a counselor at school, but he still has problems getting along with and understanding other kids, and he's worried that his dad will think he's weird. As well as having to confront Tufan, the class bully, Aaron must find ways to cope with the fact that his dad now has a pregnant wife and his beloved Gran needs surgery. In the end, his greatest strength is not his intelligence or his sense of humor, but the openness and warmth of his heart." - Pub.



## **Caterpillar Summer**

by Gilliam McDunn, c2019 (IL: 3-6; RL: 3.8)

"Since her father's death, Cat has taken care of her brother, Chicken, for their hardworking mother but while spending time with grandparents they never knew, Cat has the chance to be a child again." - Follett



## **Close to Famous**

by Joan Bauer, c2011 (IL: 5-8; RL: 4.0)

"When twelve-year-old Foster and her mother land in the tiny town of Culpepper, they don't know what to expect. But folks quickly warm to the woman with the great voice and the girl who can bake like nobody's business. Soon Foster - who dreams of having her own cooking show one day - lands herself a gig baking for the local coffee shop, and gets herself some much-needed help in overcoming her biggest challenge - learning to read . . . just as Foster and Mama start to feel at ease, their past catches up to them. Thanks to the folks in Culpepper, though Foster and her mama find the strength to put their troubles behind them for good." - Pub.



## **Anything But Typical**

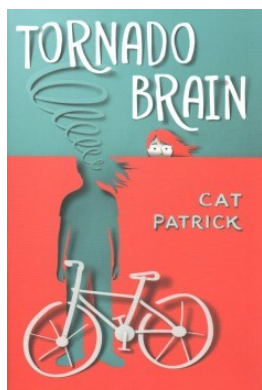
by Nora Raleigh Baskin, c2009 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 4.1)

"Dealing with autism, sixth-grader Jason finds comfort in communicating with others on the computer through his collection of short stories, but when he meets the girl of his dreams and their friendship becomes more serious, Jason fears what she will think of him when they make their plans to meet face-to-face." - Pub.



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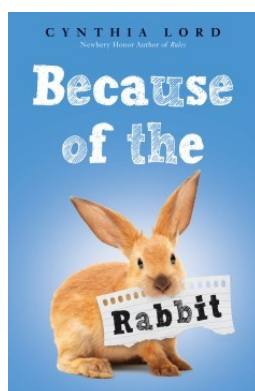
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Novels



## Tornado Brain

by Cat Patrick, c2020 (IL: 5-8; RL: 5.0)

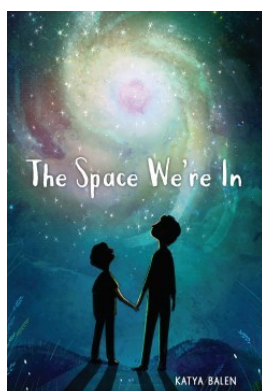
"Frankie is neurodivergent. In her case, that means she can't stand to be touched, loud noises bother her, she's easily distracted, she hates changes in her routine, and she has to go see a therapist while other kids get to hang out at the beach. It also means Frankie has trouble making friends. She did have one—Colette—but they're not friends anymore....Frankie's convinced that her former best friend left clues behind that only she can decipher, so she persuades her reluctant sister to help her unravel the mystery of Colette's disappearance before it's too late." - Pub.



## Because of the Rabbit

by Cynthia Lord, c2019 (IL: 3-6, 3-5, 3-7; RL: 4.3)

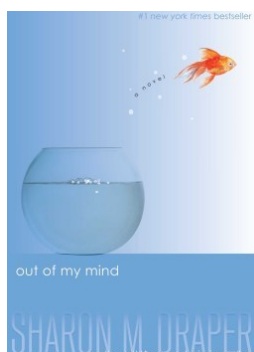
"On the last night of summer, Emma and her Maine game warden father rescue a small domestic rabbit stuck in a fence; the very next day Emma starts fifth grade after years of being home schooled, excited and apprehensive about making new friends, but she is paired with Jack, a hyperactive boy, who does not seem to fit in with anyone—except that they share a love of animals, which draws them together, because of the rabbit." - Follett



## The Space We're In

by Katya Balen, c2019 (IL: 3-6, 3-7; RL: 5.8)

"Ten-year-old Frank has trouble navigating his relationship with his younger brother Max who is autistic...Frank longs for the brother he was promised by his parents before Max was born—someone who was supposed to be his biggest fan, so he could be the best brother in the world. Instead, Frank has trouble navigating Max's behavior and their relationship. But when tragedy strikes, Frank finds a way to try and repair their fractured family and in doing so learns to love Max for who he is." - Pub.



## Out of My Mind

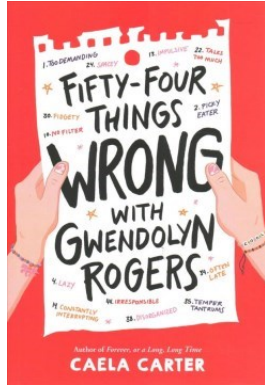
**\*LRC has 15**

by Sharon Draper, c2010 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 4.3)

"Considered by many to be mentally challenged, a brilliant, impatient fifth-grader with cerebral palsy discovers a technological device that will allow her to speak for the first time." - Pub.

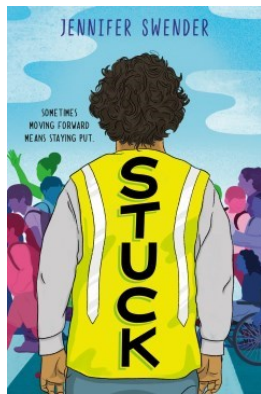
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## Fifty-four Things Wrong With Gwendolyn Rogers by Caela Carter, c2021 (IL: 3-7; RL: 5.7)

"A chronically frustrated eleven-year-old girl named Gwendolyn Rogers comes to realize she has an undiagnosed mental health issue and tries every way possible to get control of her emotions." - Pub



## Stuck by Jennifer Swender, c2021 (IL: 3-7; RL: 3.7)

"A coming-of-age story about a boy who is used to constantly moving and flying under the radar at school, and the classroom of kids who help him stand out in the best way." - Pub



## Absolutely Almost by Lisa Graf, c2015 (IL: 3-7; RL: 4.7)

"Ten-year-old Albie has never been the smartest, tallest, best at gym, greatest artist, or most musical in his class, as his parents keep reminding him, but new nanny, Calista, helps him uncover his strengths and take pride in himself." - Follett

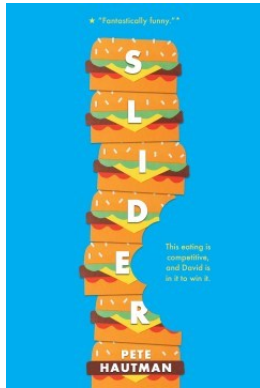


## Millicent Min, Girl Genius by Lisa Yee, c2003 (IL: 4-7)

"In a series of journal entries, eleven-year-old child prodigy Millicent Min records her struggles to learn to play volleyball, tutor her enemy, deal with her grandmother's departure, and make friends over the course of a tumultuous summer." - Follett

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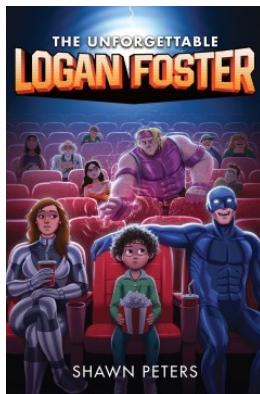
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## Slider

by Pete Hautman, c2018 (IL: 5-9; RL: 4.3)

"Hoping to win a cash prize in a pizza eating contest after racking up a tab on his mother's credit card, David must juggle his competitive eating training with the responsibility of looking after his autistic younger brother." - Pub



## The Unforgettable Logan Foster (Series: *The Unforgettable Logan Foster, Bk. 1*)

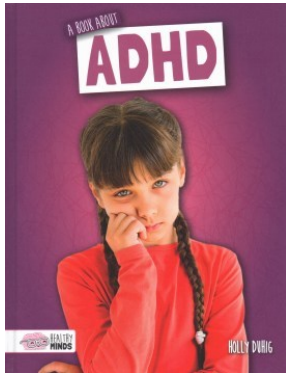
by Shawn Peters, c2022 (IL: 3-7; RL: 6.1)

"Logan, an undersized twelve-year-old orphan with a photographic memory and no filter, discovers that his foster parents are superheroes in grave danger and only Logan's highly logical mind can save them." - Pub



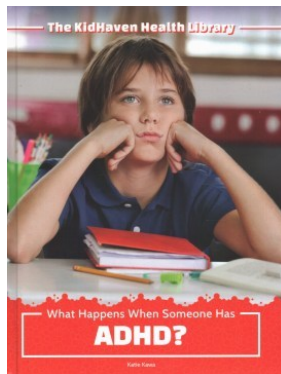
# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Neurological Diversity (Intermediate)

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Non-fiction



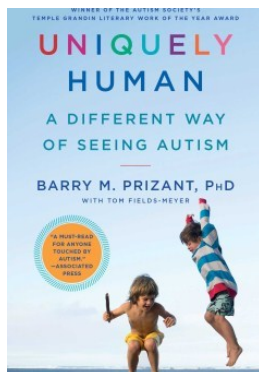
## A Book About ADHD (Series: Healthy Minds) by Holly Duhig, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 6.7)

"Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders diagnosed in children . . . a resource for anyone interested in understanding ADHD, whether they have been diagnosed with it, know someone who has it, or are just interested in learning more about the condition." - Follett



## What Happens When Someone Has ADHD? (Series: The Kidhaven Health Library)

by Katie Kawa, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 6.5)  
"Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder--commonly known as ADHD—is a relatively common disorder, but many misconceptions about it still exist. Readers discover the truth about ADHD as they explore this fact-filled guide. Information about causes, symptoms, and treatment is presented in a way that simplifies medical jargon, and sidebars, diagrams..." - Follett



## Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism by Barry M. Prizant, PHD, c2016 (IL:AD)

"Offers new insights and strategies for families affected by autism." - Follett