

Children with Disabilities

term 3, 2006

Not everyone is the same. Children are born small, large, healthy, premature or suffering from inherited diseases. Diversity is the norm. Here we have a selection of books about and for children who are just that little bit different, who maybe are not as 'able' as some others, but who are none the less as precious and important as everybody else.

Some of the books may not be in print, however they should be available from your local library.

Contributors to this list are: Kerry Aluf, Sanya Baker, Joanne Baynes, Helen Beckingsale, Crissi Blair, Anne Coppell, Sarah Fordyce, Lois Huston, Ann Luxton, Wayne Mills, Jo Noble, Lorraine Orman and Rosemary Tisdall.

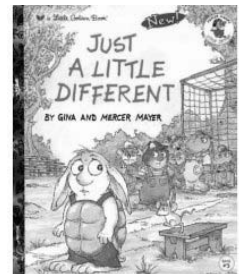
Just a Little Different

Gina and Mercer Mayer

Golden Books Publishing Company Inc, 1995

ISBN 0307988759

The Mayers have created another charming story in their *Little Critter* series, this one dealing with the acceptance of people who look different from 'normal'. The new critter in the neighbourhood is Zack and he looks different because his father is a turtle and his mother is a rabbit. At first the other critters won't play with Zack. This makes Little Critter mad and he makes a point of befriending his new neighbour. They discover they both enjoy playing the same kind of games, but it isn't until they begin to build a clubhouse in Zack's backyard that the other critters gather round and decide maybe it's a cool place to be after all. They also discover that, despite looking different, Zack is a lot of fun to be with. An excellent read-aloud to share with 2-3 year olds and up. AL



The Race

Christobel Mattingley, ill. Anne Spudvilas

Scholastic, 1995

ISBN 1863882251

Greg is a keen runner and sportsman but can never manage to win a race at school. He can do well in all class work, but not in subjects where he has to be able to hear the teacher clearly, like spelling. Greg only heard a 'fur of words, a blur of words'.

This picture book highlights the difficulties for hard of hearing children, when their impairment may not be extremely obvious to others. Greg, for example, was always told to stop daydreaming or to 'pay attention'. The illustrations clearly portray his frustration, hurt and delight as the story proceeds. RT



Home Run

Paul Collins, ill. Connah Brecon
Thomas C. Lothian, 2003
ISBN 073440526X



This picture book is based on a true story. Robbie has cerebral palsy and longs to play with the other kids. In desperation, his father asks the baseball team if Robbie can join them. They are reluctant, but agree to let him have a bat later in the game (they are losing anyway, so it won't make any difference is their attitude). You feel for Robbie's desire to achieve and be successful.

The author's royalties for *Home Run* are donated to the Cerebral Palsy Education Centre. RT

Looking after Louis

Lesley Ely, ill. Polly Dunbar
Frances Lincoln Children's Books,
2004

Hb ISBN 18450700119

This gentle story is about the inclusion of Louis, who has autistic spectrum disorder, into a regular primary classroom. Told from the perspective of Emma, who is in his class, the story explores the children's growing acceptance and understanding of Louis. Louis repeats what is said to him, mimics the teacher and dances through the boys' football game during morning break. When Sam brings a new ball to school, a connection is made when Louis produces a detailed abstract painting that Emma recognizes as the ball game that he has just played with Sam. Polly Dunbar's illustrations add another dimension of understanding to this story. Recommended for 4+. KA



Seal Surfer

Michael Foreman
Andersen Press, 2006
Hb ISBN 0152013997

Michael Foreman's touching story of friendship between a boy and a seal was originally published in 1996. A young boy visiting a rocky beach with his granddad spots a lone mother seal. The boy follows the antics of her seal pup over the seasons and together they surf some waves the following summer. The boy's use of crutches and a wheelchair are simply included as part of the illustrations.

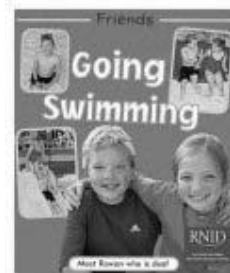
Recommended for ages 4+ KA



Going Swimming

Dianne Church, photographs
Franklin Watts, 2000
Hb ISBN 074963801X

Rowan and Annice are cousins and best friends too. They both enjoy swimming, being with friends, playing games and eating pizza. The difference between them is that Rowan is deaf. However, his deafness does not stop Rowan enjoying all the same things as his friend. This is one in a non-fiction series *Friends*, that takes real children, with real disabilities and looks at how they live normal lives. Suit ages 5-10 years. JB



Paint what you see

Dot Meharry, ill. Lindy Fisher
Reed, 2004

Pb ISBN 1869486471

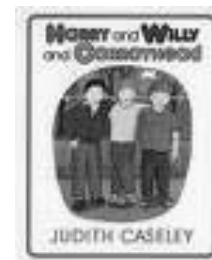
The reasons for Brook being in a wheelchair are never mentioned. His journey to acceptance of his disability and how he will not let it limit his life, is depicted in a sparse text which combines with the illustrations to show both joy and hope. Recommended for ages 5-12. Good for classroom discussion. JB



Harry and Willy and Carrothead

Judith Caseley
Greenwillow Books, 1991
ISBN 0688094929

When Harry was born he had no left hand. This brightly illustrated story goes straight to the issues, acknowledges the fears and sadness of the parents, demonstrates the reactions of other people, and shows that despite his limb deficiency Harry grows up just as other children do, using what he has the only way he knows how. It deals with the issue of Harry using a prosthetic forearm and hand, and how this is accepted by other children, who eventually acknowledge he is 'Just like a regular kid.' Then Harry meets Oscar, called 'Carrothead' because he has red hair, and sees that anyone can be bullied for any reason. A delightful story about kids being kids and learning to live together despite their differences. Excellent read-aloud to share with 5 year olds and up. AL

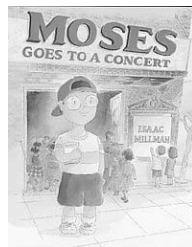


Moses Goes to a Concert

Isaac Millman

Frances Foster Books/Farrar,
Straus and Giroux, 1998
Hb ISBN 0374350671

Moses and his school friends are on a school trip to a concert. What is special about the event is that the children are all deaf – and so is the percussionist of the orchestra! After the concert their teacher, Mr Samuels takes them to meet his friend the percussionist who tells them how she achieved her goal. A worthy book, with an important message. However, the use of American Sign Language (ASL) as ‘subtitles’ is problematic in a New Zealand environment. Recommended for ages 6+. AC



We'll Paint the Octopus Red

Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen,
ill. Pam DeVito

Woodbine House 1998
Hb ISBN 1890627062

When Emma finds out she's going to be a big sister she's not that happy, but then she starts planning all the things she can do with the baby. But when her baby brother is born, there's a problem – he has Down syndrome. Emma goes back through her list of things to do with the baby and her dad reassures her that they'll be able to do all of them – just maybe a little later and with some help. Recommended for ages 6+. AC



Talking to Angels

Esther Watson

Harcourt Brace, 1996
Hb ISBN 0152010777

Crista is autistic and her sister Esther shares Christa's way of looking at the world. It is only at the end that Esther says Christa is autistic. An amazing book. Recommended for ages 6+. AC



Be Good to Eddie Lee

By Virginia Fleming, ill. Floyd
Cooper

Philomel Books, 1993
PB ISBN 0399219935

Christy thinks her neighbour Eddie Lee is a pest and so does JimBud. When Christy and JimBud go to the pond looking for frog eggs Eddie Lee follows along. Eddie Lee shows Christy a special place in the wood and Christy begins to appreciate Eddie Lee's way of looking at the world. Eddie Lee has Down syndrome. Recommended for ages 7+. AC



Dustin's BIG School Day

Alden R. Carter, photographs
by Dan Young and Carol S.
Carter

Albert Whitman & Company,
1999

Hb ISBN 0807517410

Dustin's school is really looking forward to Dave and Skippy visiting. All day Dustin keeps thinking about it and all the teachers make Dave and Skippy part of the lessons. Ms Juedes, the speech therapist, has Dustin practice saying things about them; Mrs Fadrowski includes them in their math problems. Finally they come and Dustin is the one to go and meet them. Dustin's Down syndrome isn't part of the story, but is obvious in the photographs. What makes this book, and its companion *Dustin is a Big Brother*, so special is that Dustin is treated as a normal kid, doing normal kid things. Recommended for ages 7+. AC



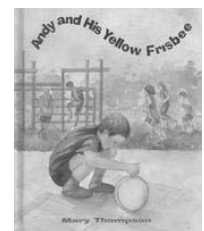
Andy and His Yellow Frisbee

Mary Thompson

Woodbine House, 1996

Hb ISBN 09333149832

Sarah, who is new to the school, is fascinated by Andy who looks like everyone else, but who behaves differently. For a start, he spends most of recess spinning his yellow Frisbee, sometimes with his sister Rosie keeping an eye on him. Sarah tries to befriend Andy, but lets him set his own pace and rules. The book also includes notes explaining what autism is. Recommended for ages 7+. AC



Private and Confidential

Marion Ripley, ill. by Colin
Backhouse

Frances Lincoln, 2003
Hb ISBN 0711220972

Laura becomes pen friends with Malcolm from Australia. They exchange a couple of letters then there's a big gap – until Laura receives a letter from Malcolm's sister explaining that Malcolm has had to have an eye operation and will never have full sight. Laura visits a friend's auntie to borrow her braille machine – and Malcolm writes back in Braille. Included is an alphabet card to translate the letter. Recommended for ages 7+. AC



The Truth About Toffee

Janet Slater Bottin & Alice Bell
Scholastic, 2003
ISBN 1869435508

A delightful book, in both text and design, with special appeal to young horse lovers. Skye's short letters to her Nan tell of her Riding School and her special horse, Toffee. The reader soon realises that Skye's school is part of the RDA (Riding for the Disabled) scheme. Skye is excited to learn there are two new horses coming to the school but this excitement soon turns to dismay. They are to replace two older horses - and one is Toffee. It's a moving story; in only one place is it revealed that Skye is disabled; the text is bright and cheerful and the resolution highly satisfying. Top marks for the type design, the colour and the illustrations. Recommended for ages 7 - 10 years. JN



In the Clear

Anne Laurel Carter
Orca Books, 2001
Pb ISBN 155143192

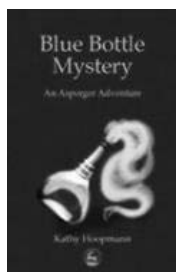
Set in Canada in the late 1950s, this novel follows 12 year old Pauline as she struggles to adapt to her life after surviving polio which has left her with emotional scars and a shrunken leg. Flashbacks reveal Pauline's hospital ordeal, months spent in the iron lung, her selective muteness, painful physical therapy and the cruel nurses at the rehabilitation hospital. Now Pauline watches life go by from her favoured window seat before slowly, with the help of her father and beloved Tante Marie, she begins to rebuild broken friendships, follows her love of ice hockey, and considers a return to school, all under the seemingly disapproving eye of her overprotective mother. Recommended for ages 9+. KA



Blue Bottle Mystery (An Asperger Adventure)

Kathy Hoopmann
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001
Pb ISBN 1853029785

Ben and his best friend Andy find a blue bottle in the school ground and make some wishes. When they begin to come true they try to remember all of them. Ben's grandmother convinces his father to take Ben to a doctor, where Ben is diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome. As the Syndrome is explained to the family and Ben, it helps explain it to the reader, too. Followed by *Of Mice and Aliens* and *Lisa and the Lacemaker*. Recommended for ages 8+. AC



Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key

Jack Gantos
Harper Collins, 1998
Pb 0064408337

Joey can't sit still in class and is constantly getting into mischief. He's currently on medication but his life is a succession of highs and lows. He fails to get a grip on his life and at times this may seem humorous to the reader but underlying it all are quite serious home problems such as the scary emotional manipulation by his grandmother. Recommended for ages 10+. WM



Me & My Electric

Edited by Elizabeth Laird
Mammoth, 1998
PB ISBN 0749729228

A collection of short stories, told to authors, by children with disabilities. What comes across most strongly is the fact that the children are 'normal' - with interests and dreams common to all - they just live their lives a bit differently. Their disabilities range from deafness to cerebral palsy. Scott discusses the joys and fears of an overseas family holiday; Sang focuses on his adoption; Lucy looks at her life as a preteen. Recommended for ages 8+. AC



Lizzie, Love

Brenda Delamain
Longacre, 2006
Pb ISBN 1877361399

Based on true events that took place in 1833, this fictional story focuses on Lizzie Kemp, 12-year-old daughter of the Kemp missionary family based in Kerikeri. Lizzie is the oldest of seven children, and her life is made very difficult when her baby brother dies and her mother has a nervous breakdown. Lizzie has a paralysed leg from a childhood illness, and uncomplainingly makes her way round using crutches and a leg splint. Her disability is portrayed in a very matter-of-fact manner as just another facet of her life - something to be accepted and coped with. Best for intermediate ages. LO



The truth Out There

Celia Rees

Dorling Kindersley, 2000

ISBN 0789426684

This novel focuses on the misunderstanding of conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome and autism before such conditions were diagnosed and recognised. 13 year old Josh has always understood that his Uncle Patrick died young but finds he was committed to an institution by his father who found his rather bizarre behaviour intolerable. Josh deduces that his uncle is still alive when he recognises elements in a computer game that must have been created by someone familiar with his family home. The story is presented as a mystery and the cover suggests it is science fiction but the underlying message is that people with Asperger's Syndrome can lead productive lives if treated with understanding and tolerance. Recommended for ages 11+. HB



Saffy's Angel

Hilary, McKay

Hodder, 2001

ISBN 0340850809

Sarah, in her racing wheel-chair, does not appear for several chapters in the story of Saffy and her eccentric family. However she is glimpsed in the background, the children are told not to point at her, and when she does enter the story, by accidentally crashing into Saffy in her wheelchair she becomes an integral part of the plot. She is determined not to be limited by her disability, hates being ignored because she is in a wheelchair, knows how to manipulate her parents to get her own way and is the prime mover in getting Saffy to Siena in search of her missing angel. Sarah is also an important character in the other books about the Casson family - *Indigo's Star*, *Permanent Rose* and *Caddy Ever After*.

Recommended for ages 11+. HB



Wheels

Catherine MacPhail

Puffin, 2003

Pb ISBN

0141314729

When James is paralysed in a car accident and his dad killed, James feels that life isn't worth living until one day he sees the driver responsible. But how could that be? The driver was also killed in the accident... or was he? Just who was driving? Can James find out before it's too late? Exciting read for ages 11-14 years. JB



Monkey

Veronica Bennett

Walker Books, 1998

ISBN 0744583470

Harry thinks that life couldn't get any worse. He's bullied at school, bored at home and he's interested in Louise Harding, but she doesn't even know he exists. So when his mother volunteers Harry to visit a severely disabled man, Harry is furious. *the truth was, it was unimaginable. And the thought of spending precious hours every week with someone in this unreal, practically unhuman condition not only dismayed, but scared him.*

A story of a friendship that grows. Recommended for ages 11+. LH



Surf's Up

Diana Chase

Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1999

Pb ISBN 1863682503

Matt hates his weak leg and the raised boot he is forced to wear. He's been a loner at school, used to the hurtful nicknames – Bungfoot and Hoppy – but now his family has moved to Margaret River. A surfing town, where the break and riding the wave are all that matter. He befriends Brad, and finds that he has a knack for riding a board and that once in the water his weak leg no longer matters. Matt must now help Brad sort out his life. Recommended for ages 11+. KA



See Ya, Simon

David Hill

Mallinson Rendel/ Puffin, 1992

Hb ISBN 0908606850

Pb ISBN 0143318020

Simon and Nathan are great mates with similar interests – computers, girls, collecting tabloid headlines, but there is one distinct difference, Simon has muscular dystrophy and is likely to die in the next few years. A great commentary on the relationship between the boys and how each of them cope with the illness and its consequences. A realistic portrayal of the illness and of life for a teenage boy. Recommended for 11-15 years. CB



Coming Back

David Hill
Mallinson Rendel, 2004
Pb ISBN 0908783868

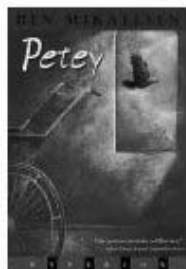
Teenager Ryan has his restricted license but drives with his friends in the car. While distracted he runs over a young girl, Tara. She is badly injured and Ryan becomes involved with her recovery process and gets to know her friends. Essential reading for up-coming drivers and a realistic look at what happens when someone suffers a head injury. Recommended for ages 12+. CB



Petey

Ben Mikaelson
Hyperion, 2000
Pb ISBN 0786813369

Petey has lived in institutions all his life due to his severe cerebral palsy. Unable to speak he is regarded, and treated, as an 'idiot'. Petey's first 'angel' is Esteban, one of the workers, who begins to communicate with Petey utilising Petey's limited voluntary movement. And so Petey's life continues – an angel steps in, and then leaves. Until 1990 when young Trevor comes into Petey's life. An emotional and heart-breaking read. Recommended for ages 12+. AC



CRASH! The Story of Poddy

William Taylor
Scholastic, 2000
Pb ISBN 1869434854

Poddy idolises his older brother Jack, who some-times struggles to cope with a Down's syndrome sibling. The story revolves around a car crash where Poddy struggles to save Jack and their father, using the skills he learnt in Scouting First Aid classes. He must then get help, even though he is so wary of strangers.

The chapters alternate between the scene of the accident and snapshots of Poddy's family life. Many of his antics are amusing but Jack sometimes struggles to cope with having Poddy following him round. The accident makes Jack realise just how special Poddy really is to him. Recommended for ages 12+. SF



Peeling the Onion

Wendy Orr
Allen and Unwin, 1996
Holiday House, 1997
ISBN 0440227739

This is an absorbing novel for teens, with believable characters and although the story is set in Australia this is a scenario which could happen to any of us.



17 year old Anna is a karate champion who is left with multiple injuries after a car crash. After months of therapy she learns that she will be permanently disabled and has to find out who she really is now that all the activities which were so important to her are no longer part of her life. Recommended for ages 13+ HB

Stoner & Spaz

Ron Koertge
Walker Books, 2002
ISBN 0763616087

The beginning of this 'beautiful friendship' is at the movies; only the friends-to-be are watching one rather than living in it. Stoner, actually Colleen, is hiding out at the movies from the drug-dealing control freak she is going out with while Spaz, actually Ben, a teen with cerebral palsy and a wicked sense of humour is plain hiding.

First of all, no way am I gimping down the aisle during Monster Week while the lights are still on. People will think I'm part of the show. And second of all, no way am I sitting by Colleen. She is nothing but trouble.

At no time cloying or sentimental this is a great story with living, breathing characters who are sure to touch teens' hearts. SB



Going Straight

Michael Coleman
Orchard Books, 2003
Pb ISBN 1843622998

Luke, a PYO (Persistent Youth Offender), is on the road to becoming a minor crim like his Dad, when he is busted nicking running shoes from the Webb family's vehicle. Luke must serve community service by training as a guide runner for blind Jodi Webb, so she can run the London Marathon. Homeschooled and totally blind since infancy, Jodi sees this as a chance to grasp some independence away from her overprotective parents. Recommended for ages 13+. KA



Breath

Donna Jo Napoli
Athenium, 2003
Hb ISBN 0689861745

A gritty, realistic retelling of the Pied Piper folk tale. Salz, a lame boy suffering from a breathing affliction (explained in the postscript as cystic fibrosis), is an outcast and spared along with the younger children of Hamelyn and the surrounding countryside from a strange maddening disease which strikes at the beer drinking adults.



First blamed on a rat plague which overruns the area – the superstitious locals, even his own brother, begin to view Salz with suspicion. Salz suggests the town hires a piper, whose music charmed the animals in the woods the summer before. Recommended for ages 14+ KA

Read My Lips

Jana Novotny Hunter

Walker Books, 2002

Pb ISBN 0744590531

At deaf city, a residential school for the deaf, the lines are drawn between the signers and the speakers. Cat, now in her final year, chose years before to be a signer, but is attracted to newcomer Joey, a speaker. She begins to question the intense rivalry and intolerance between the two groups as her new friendship causes friction and hurt on both sides. Soon they will be moving on, into the real world, how will they cope if they can hardly communicate with each other? Jana Hunter grew up with two profoundly deaf siblings, a signer and a speaker, which inspired her to write this story. Recommended for ages 14+ KA



Stuck in Neutral

Terry Trueman

Harper Collins, 2002

Pb ISBN 0064472132

This debut novel was a Printz Honor Book. Enter the fascinating and brilliant mental world of 14 year old Shawn, who has severe cerebral palsy. Shawn, who is utterly dependent on others, is not able to control the slightest physical movement. His mind is constantly buzzing with thoughts and observations, but on the outside he is a drooling, jerking incompetent unable to make that spark of connection his father needs to see. Recommended for ages 14+ KA



The beat of the drum

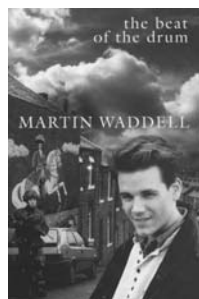
Martin Waddell

Walker Books, 2001

Pb ISBN 0744578248

Brian, who was permanently injured as a baby by an IRA bomb that killed his parents, watches the machinations and manipulations of the Loyalists and the IRA, and the inevitable bleak conclusions from his wheelchair.

Dependent on whoever will push his dilapidated chair around for him, he strives to protect family and friends and to survive the hatred on the mean streets of Ulster. Recommended for ages 14+ KA



Ceiling Stars

Sandra Diersch

James Lorimer & Co, 2004

Pb ISBN 1550288342

Christine's longstanding friendship with Danelle is being tested by Danelle's increasingly erratic and risky behaviour. Christine's other friends, including the steady Jack, are easier to be with and looking forward to graduation, but she seems to be Danelle's only true friend. Is the increasingly impulsive Danelle, with her bizarre notes and whispery conversations, on drugs? As the friendship breaks down Christine, frust-rated and angry, reaches out for help for her out-of-control friend. A startling look at teenage mental illness. 14+ KA



Inside Out

Terry Trueman

HarperCollins, 2005

Pb ISBN 0064473767

What happens when a teen schizophrenic is taken hostage in a coffee shop holdup? 16 year old Zac is almost due to take his medication, so those vicious voices will stay out of his head, when an armed robbery by two youths starts to go wrong. Close to the edge, Zac struggles to keep hold of his mind as the mayhem unfolds. A shockingly powerful story – thrilling and ultimately heartbreaking. Recommended for ages 15+ KA



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Mark Haddon

David Fickling Books, 2003

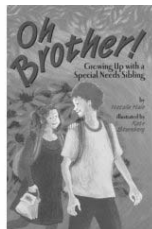
ISBN 0385605870

This intriguing mystery is narrated by 15 year-old Christopher; a brilliant autistic boy who can understand a great deal about the world but is mystified by the people in it. It opens with a dead dog. Not just dead, but murdered. Christopher likes dogs because they only have four moods – 'happy, sad, cross and concentrating'. He can cope with four. And as he determines to uncover who killed this dog and why, moving ever-deeper into mystery, the reader journeys deeper into understanding and empathy with him. Deceptively simple, this treasure of a story allows the reader to look out through Christopher's eyes and look in at them at the same time. Highly recommended for ages 13+. SB



Oh, Brother! Growing Up With A Special Needs Sibling

Natalie Hale
Ill. Kate Sternberg
Imagination Press, 2004
Hb ISBN 1591470609



Written from the point of view of Rebecca, who has an older brother with special needs (Jonathan, aged 13). Rebecca discusses what it's like to have a brother who does strange and embarrassing things. The text is loaded with compassion and commonsense, and would be useful for children in contact with someone who has a mild mental disability. Would not be useful in situations involving severe physical or mental disability. Best for intermediate ages. LO

Don't Just Sit There

Tony Christiansen with Liz Dobson
HarperCollins, 2005
Pb ISBN 1869505719



An inspirational telling of Tony Christiansen's life story. At age nine Tony lost both legs in a shunting accident at the local railyards. He has lived his life with the philosophy of 'do it' – never letting his lack of legs stand in the way of achieving his goals. From representing New Zealand and winning gold in international sports events, running a successful signwriting business to car racing and scuba diving. Now a motivational speaker, Tony encourages readers to go for their goals, no giving up. Recommended for ages 13+. KA

Out on a Limb: the Autobiography of Heather Mills

Little, Brown & Company, 1995
ISBN 0316913987

This is the inspirational story of Heather Mills' early years. Coming from a seriously dysfunctional family, she grew up to be a strong individual who looked after her siblings in the only way she knew how, even resorting to shoplifting to keep the family in food. Eventually she contrived to get a job as a model, and became a very successful one. This came to a sudden end when she was hit by a police motorcyclist and she lost a leg. Through this Heather became involved in the development of an organisation taking unwanted artificial limbs to (former) Yugoslavia to help the victims of war. A moving story of one amazing woman's life. This all happened before she met and married Paul McCartney and became famous for another reason. AL

Looking the other way: Raising children with special needs in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Stephanie Weaver
HarperCollins, 1999
ISBN 1869503198

Stephanie Weaver is the mother of a daughter with a profound intellectual disability, and in this book provides an invaluable resource for parents and whanau, foster-families, caregivers and professionals. Stephanie addresses the issues of how to cope with day to day life with a child with a disability or severe health problems or needs, and how to survive the isolation, stresses, guilt and grief - and still be able to communicate with the health and education professionals. Through sharing the experiences of different families, others can be empowered in their constant struggle to deal with prejudice and systems that don't meet their needs. AL

For more information about books about and for children with disabilities, visit the CCS website:
ccs.org.nz/library_resources.php

Coming in the Term 4 newsletter, November:
Recommendations for Christmas presents – for children or yourself

Comments? Feedback? Email Storylines at: childlitz@storylines.org.nz