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Quirky Kids: Understanding and Helping Your Child Who Doesn't Fit In- When to Worry and When Not to Worry

Perri Klass, Eileen Costello

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The toddler whose tantrums scare all the other kids on the playground . . . The three-year-old who ignores all his toys but seems passionately attached to the vacuum cleaner . . . The fourth-grade girl who never gets invited to a birthday party because classmates think she's "weird" . . . The geek who is terrific at math, but is failing every other subject. Quirky children are different from other kids in ways that they–and their parents and teachers–have a hard time understanding or explaining. Straddling the line between eccentric and developmentally impaired, quirky children present challenges that standard parenting books fail to address. Now, in *Quirky Kids*, nationally known writer/pediatrician Perri Klass and her colleague Eileen Costello, a seasoned pediatrician with a special interest in child development, finally provide the expert guidance and in-depth research that families with quirky children so desperately need.

A generation ago, such children were called odd ducks or worse. But nowadays, they are often assigned medical, psychiatric, or neurological diagnoses. The diagnoses often overlap or shift, but the labels can be frightening. Klass and Costello illuminate the confusing list of terms applied to quirky children these days–nonverbal learning disability, sensory integration disorder, obsessive-compulsive behavior, autistic spectrum disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, Asperger's syndrome–and explain how to assess what exactly each diagnosis means and how to use it to help a child most effectively.

Quirky Kids takes you through the stages of a child's life, helping to smooth the way at home, at school, even on the playground. How do you make it through mealtime, when emotions often erupt? How do you help the child's siblings understand what's going on? Is it better to "mainstream" the child or seek a special education program? How can you make a school more welcoming and flexible for a quirky child? How do you help your child deal with social exclusion, name-calling, and bullying?

Choosing the right therapy for quirky children is especially difficult, because their problems fall outside traditional medical categories. Coping strategies might include martial arts or horseback riding, or speech and occupational therapies. Klass and Costello cover all the options, as well as offer a thorough consideration of the available medications, how they work, and whether medication is the best choice for your child.

Drs. Klass and Costello firmly believe that the ideal way to help our quirky kids is to understand and embrace the qualities that make them exceptionally interesting and lovable. Written with upbeat clarity and informed insight, their book is a comprehensive guide to loving, living with, and enjoying these wonderful if challenging children.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Mario Curtin:

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Denise Wentzel:

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