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Something Different about Dad: How to Live with Your Asperger's Parent

Kirsti Evans
John Swogger, illustrator
Jessica Kingsley Publishers (January 2011)
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Young children may not notice anything “different” about a parent or other adult relative. But as they grow older, they might begin to observe behavior traits that most adults don’t share. A parent who seems different can cause confusion or embarrassment for a child, especially if he or she doesn’t understand what’s causing the behavior. This book is written for the children of parents who have Asperger’s Syndrome, a collection of certain differences and difficulties and part of the autism spectrum.

Recent years have seen a considerable increase in the number of people, predominantly males, diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome. As children suspected of having the disorder are tested, adults in their lives who were previously overlooked are often diagnosed as well. The author, Kirsti Evans, says children and young people face unique challenges in living with an adult who has Asperger’s, yet there is little written for their age group to teach or support them.

In *Something Different about Dad: How to Live with Your Asperger’s Parent,* the story of a family that includes a father with Asperger’s is told through his daughter Sophie. Sophie’s dad would do or say things at school functions or family gatherings that made the rest of the family angry or upset and embarrassed. She didn’t understand his behavior until it was explained to the family that it was caused by his medical condition.

This book is illustrated cartoon-style and is easy to read. The explanations about Asperger Syndrome are simple and clear, with suggestions as to how to minimize the impact of the father’s condition on the family, while understanding and empathizing with his behavior. Sophie and her family learn there are things they can do to make living with their dad less difficult and frustrating for all of them. “This is a story about us realizing we don’t love Dad any less because he has Asperger’s Syndrome,” says Sophie. Primarily written for children ages 7-15, this book is also helpful for people working with children who have parents or other adult relatives with Asperger’s in their lives.

Author Kirsti Evans is an Autism Development Coordinator at Autism West Midlands for children and young people in Shropshire, England. John Swogger is a book and magazine illustrator.
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