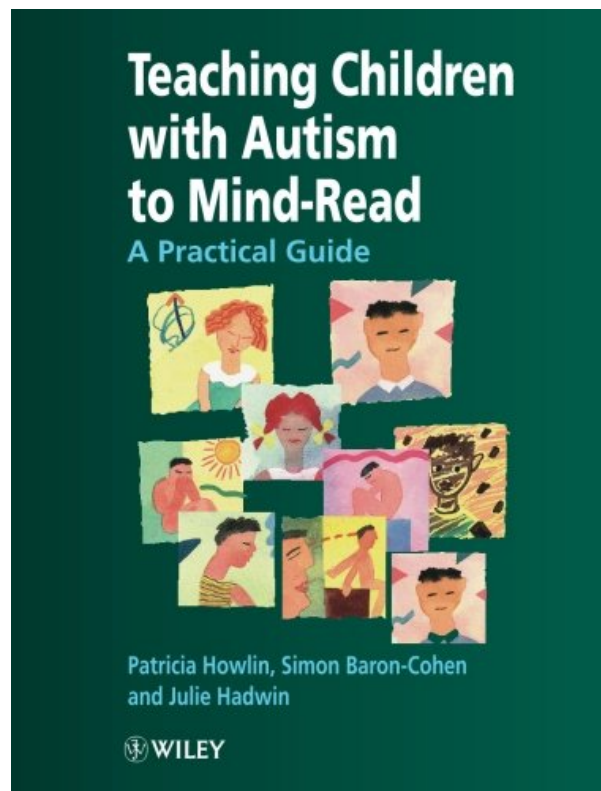


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# Teaching Children with Autism to Mind-Read

A Practical Guide



Patricia Howlin, Simon Baron-Cohen  
and Julie Hadwin

 WILEY

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## Review

..."is highly recommended for teachers, speech and language clinicians, psychologists and others who work with more able children with autism"

--Child Psychology Psychiatry, Vol 41/8, 2000

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Henry Wellman, Harold W. Stevenson Collegiate Professor of Psychology, University of Michigan

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This is the first guide on applying Theory of Mind--the ability to infer the mental states of others and use this information to interpret their behavior--to children with autism. It concentrates on the effective treatment of social and communicative abnormalities in children with autism, guiding the reader through the underlying experimental and clinical principles. It then gives a graded program for teaching children each of these skills.

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The difficulties experienced by children with autism and related conditions in inferring the thoughts, beliefs, desires and intentions of others are well documented in numerous studies. It now seems that these deficits underlie many of the social and communication problems that are characteristic of autism. Teaching Children with Autism to Mind-Read explores the relationship of "theory of mind" deficits to other areas of children's functioning and describes existing experimental work that has attempted to enhance the skills associated with understanding others' minds.

Drawing on their own intervention programme, and providing detailed information about the teaching materials and strategies they use, the authors provide practical guidelines for helping children with autism spectrum conditions to improve their understanding of beliefs, emotions and pretence. The authors tackle specific problematic issues including:

- \* how to interpret facial expressions
- \* how to recognise feelings of anger, sadness, fear and happiness
- \* how feelings are affected by what happens and what is expected to happen
- \* how to see things from another person's perspective
- \* how to understand another person's knowledge and beliefs

This easy-to-follow graded teaching guide is of particular relevance to special needs teachers, educational and clinical psychologists, speech and language therapists, and carers of children with autism spectrum conditions.

- Sales Rank: #546784 in Books
- Published on: 1998-03
- Released on: 1998-12-29
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.70" h x .72" w x 7.50" l, 1.27 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 302 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

119 of 128 people found the following review helpful.

Perhaps Not as Good as the Title Appears

By A Customer

I had serious questions about Patricia Howlin's real understanding of HFA/AS issues when I read her "Autism: Preparing for Adulthood." Whatever doubts I had then have been resolved not in her favor with this most recent effort.

The book is written for training work with very young children. Parents using this material for any of our hyperlexic children over the age of four or five may be sadly disappointed with the results. The book appears written for and at a simplistic level of conversation that our bright older children simply may not tolerate. The cost of the book, no doubt, may have been in developing all of the artwork--the book is heavily line-drawing illustrated--with little thought to making it age-relevant to an older audience. In their first chapter, the authors suggest the book is for use for children from four to thirteen years old. I have my doubts about that. I'm no expert on these matters, but I can only guess this book should be so labeled: "For Children Five and Younger." The book's value lies in its repetitive presentation of different stages or levels of conceptual complexity. I do not take issue with what the authors say or do. I can only surmise that parents of older children would have to engage their own commercial artists to make the illustrations more age-appropriate, and also do a complete story-text re-write for the concepts to ring true with more mature children. Indeed, the authors suggest that is necessary. So why not place these thoughts on the cover and in the promotional material for the book?

This book may be fine for a four year old. Intolerable, I would think, to our older kids.

I was hoping to find enough material in the book for "transfer" to older child, adolescent, and young to mature adult communications and social skills training, using the model and the training map of the authors. I am sorry to report that I have neither the will nor the energy to do that, as the authors provide a reader looking to this older population with few handles to grasp.

Despite the good discussion of the concepts involved at the beginning of the book, the actual use of the book, as "A Practical Guide" appears limited to the age group I identify above.

What disappoints me most is that the book appears to be written as a compromise between those who think completely "in their heads" and those who are on the play-room floor. There doesn't appear to be a bright shining light urging all such experts to get out into the real world of older children, adolescents, young and older adults, and test their methods at those levels.

In contrast, I found the explanations and practical cognitive mapping exercises of two somewhat "history-

bound" authors, Stephen Nowicki, Jr, and Marshal P. Duke, in their 1992 Peachtree Publishers book "Helping the Child Who Doesn't Fit In" to be of far greater consequence and practical assistance. Despite the fact that it was written before the "discovery" for all practical purposes of HFA/AS to the wider audience, their book rings true and presents a pragmatic road map to the semantic linguistic and semiotic language of social interaction sadly missing from the Howlin, B-C, Hadwin 1999 effort.

Hats off to the authors for their cognitive model and the approach of this book for pre-school children. Rainboots and umbrellas needed for those willing to slog it out in the trenches of more complex demands and real-life problems of older children.

END

33 of 36 people found the following review helpful.

Good for mild autistic young kid

By cheung sc eric

I am father of a mild autistic 4 years old kid. My son drops away a lot of autistic features now after diagnosis at 2 yrs old. He is OK for a lot of things. Now verbal at nearly same age, behaviour OK without any hyper or strange things, however, social and temper are the areas need to be improved. With the recommendation of his doctor, I bought this book here. The aim of the book is to teach the kid to know what is proper feeling with different environment or situations. The book gives me hints how to tell him what are expressions, how to react with strange things or environments,.. etc...

In particular that we live in Hong Kong, some illustrations and drawings are not appropriate to our urban city. ( e.g. what is your feeling when you see a snake in the grass ? ((( sorry we cannot see any snake in HK ))) ) It is still OK with most of the situations given.

It is good for young mild autistic, I have shared my book with other families with same "problem" I am also a vice chairman of an association of autistic kids parents in Hong Kong.

I am very appreciated that the publisher will send you another "book" of worksheets that you do not need to write on the original book. You can use that worksheets to teach your kid or class. the publisher gives you right to photocopy the worksheets as long as you entitled the original book! These worksheets sent to me or any buyer free of charge via airmail ( all free of charge when you request, and I got it after three weeks when I requested via email.. given by the book.

Worth a try but not cheap though. All autism books are expensive!

37 of 43 people found the following review helpful.

Great part of a program for young children with autism

By Paul Mckenney

This book contains a great program for teaching young children with autism how to interpret facial expressions and other social cues. It is aimed at young children.

If you have a teenager with autism, you may need more help, since the typical teen's social environment is much more complex than that of a younger child. This of course begs the question of why anyone would wait until their child was a teenager to start addressing his/her autism. One should instead start as early as possible, preferably well before 3 years of age, and definitely before 5 years of age. The longer you wait, the more difficult it gets, and the less promising the prognosis.

Is this book the only resource you will need to address your child's autism? Most definitely not! You should read "Let Me Hear Your Voice" by Catherine Maurice, and you should find a parent support group near you (check [...] for a list by region). ABA treatment is a must, and some children also benefit from changes in diet, megavitamin therapy, and other treatments. ABA (especially), diet, and vitamins helped several children in my community go from a diagnosis of autism to testing in the normal range. But they all started very aggressive treatment early: before the age of 4.

So, read this book, but also gather information in the area of ABA, diet, and vitamins. Find other parents who are aggressively addressing their child's autism--you will need the mutual support. Above all, hit your child's autism with everything you can as early as you possibly can! There is not yet a guaranteed cure, but

you can give your child a fighting chance of attaining a normal level of functioning.

See all 14 customer reviews...



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