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Gardner's "Friends like Henry: Everything your family needs to know about finding, training and learning from an autism companion dog" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Gardner, N. (2019). *Friends like Henry: Everything your family needs to know about finding, training and learning from an autism companion dog*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Philadelphia, PA. 312 pp. ISBN 9781785926785

Friends like Henry, same as *A Friend like Henry* and *All Because of Henry* that were published with a film, is written by Scottish New York Times bestselling author Nuala Gardner, who raised her own two autistic children and led the new care method of “therapy dogs” to public attention, which prompted schools to adopt the method which showed positive results.

Friends like Henry, as a new addition to previous publications of the author, who is also an experienced nurse and midwife, is not only again written based on the author’s personal experience, but also a pilot study of eight families which are from the UK and other countries.

The book is a training manual guide for planning, preparation, and matching the dogs with the families of autistic children, adult, and those with learning disabilities. The author introduces the four-stage training program she designed to help parents to achieve the best result of a therapy dog. She discusses practical issues such as how to find the right dogs and how to use a transition kit to prepare autistic children for the dogs, points out warnings such as to not rush into the program, not to overlook the uniqueness of each child, family, and not to ignore the welfare of both dogs and children.

Caregivers, families, and researchers of young people with ASD or other learning disabilities can be benefited by this book. It can also be used for those who wish to learn more about parenting children and caring for dogs.

In a word, the book thoroughly discusses training methods, successful cases, and needs of children, dog, and families, backed up with research findings. The references are listed into the Endnote at the end of the book. One criticism can be that the organizing of the chapters might be hard to follow for readers who are new to the subject, as though the author repeatedly says, “I’ll explain that later in the book”, it is hard to predict what discussion to expect next.

Reviewer

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