

Book Title: What Makes Ryan Tick? A Family's Triumph over Tourette Syndrome and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Author: Susan Hughes

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Book Review by Rick Lindberg

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This book provides updated information on Susan Hughes' son, Ryan. Her first book, *Ryan, A Mother's Story of Her Hyperactive/Tourette Syndrome Child*, described Ryan's early childhood years and the trials associated with coming to grips with the diagnosis. This book describes Ryan's school years from third grade into high school. Susan Hughes explains the ups and downs of living with Ryan through the numerous school placements and medical regimes.

Hughes provides an excellent account of what can go wrong--and right--within the special education system. She makes it very clear that many of the professionals who treated Ryan were not educated about Tourette Syndrome and typical comorbid disorders. She became educated about her son's conditions and special education law. Much of her time was spent either caring for Ryan or trying to obtain appropriate treatment. It is clear that without her individual efforts, Ryan would have spent much of his life in an institution. Susan Hughes also had to rebuff accusations that Ryan's behavior was due to deficient parenting, a typical response from treatment centers that could not find a way to get through to Ryan.

Another constant battle that Susan Hughes fought was the ever-changing medications prescribed for Ryan. She had to constantly monitor dosages so that Ryan could go to school and maintain appropriate behavior without making him a zombie. Unfortunately, the school's point of view was the more medication, the better.

It was also very interesting to see how Ryan reacted to his condition. He fluctuated from displaying aggressive behavior to feeling bad about himself and apologetic. The message here is that Ryan was basically "a good kid" who could not control most of his negative behaviors. This was a point that teachers and service staff often missed.

The main point that I took from this book is to look at each student from several perspectives. Don't assume anything until all possibilities are examined. The author's description of confrontations with administrators, teachers, and doctors should be required reading for new special education teachers. It certainly gave me a new view on listening to parents when they talk about their child.