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**Book Review**

**Exceptional Children, EDUC324**

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***A Slant of Sun: One Child’s Courage* by Beth Kephart**

We often take for granted verbal communication, our ability to interpret non verbal cues, and the capability of the mind to process a great amount of stimuli at once. To most people learning to talk comes naturally and interacting with others is easy. This is not true for everyone. In *A Slant of Sun* author Beth Kephart shares her story of raising a son with exceptionalities.

Kephart writes this novel from first person point of view. The time span of the book is from her son’s birth to when he is in lower elementary school. In this autobiography she shares her thoughts and actions, and her joys and struggles. When her son is two and a half years old he is diagnosed with “pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified” (page 9). Raising a child with exceptionalities was extremely difficult for Kephart and she doesn’t make light of that.

I found the book to be discouraging, dark, and serious, yet I appreciated the author’s honesty about her feelings and I sympathized with her. I’m glad she wrote about her challenging times because it’s the truth that raising any child is not always going to be easy and no parent is perfect. This book may be a great encouragement to any parent who is raising a child with exceptionalities. She discusses her fight against fear when she notices her son is not “normal” and her battle against labeling her son when the doctors do find atypical characteristics in him.

After reading this book some points that a parent may take away is that it’s okay if their child has an exceptionality and not to lose hope. Kephart got discouraged many times but she never gave up. She was selfless and always tried to do what she thought was best for her son. It wasn’t easy looking after a child with his mannerisms but she never stopped loving him. She bought toys that he liked to play with and played with him when she was too physically exhausted to do much of anything. She organized play dates, trips to the park, and day care hoping that he would make friends.

After reading this story, I felt challenged to be more patient towards children with disabilities. People often push these children to the side and focus on the children that have more “potential” but Kephart acted in the opposite way. She saw potential in her son and wanted him to succeed despite all the odds that were against him; physical, mental, emotional and social odds. I now have a better understanding of what a parent experiences when his/her child is growing up with exceptionalities. I’ve never stopped to think what a parent goes through raising a child like this. In the past I’ve mostly thought of the child and the limitations he/she would have in school. This is only a small portion of all that encompasses the life of someone with exceptionalities.

I would recommend this book to any parent or teacher that has a child with a disability as well as relatives and friends. Not only does Kephart share her feelings in this book but also uses outside sources to describe the disorder that her son has and the scientific aspect associated with it. I appreciated her inclusion of the results from her research of autism and other related disorders. I have a better idea now of what parents may experience if they have a child with exceptionalities. This knowledge will help me as a teacher when I relate to children and their parents that have such needs as these. Reading this book was valuable not only to my future career but also to my personal life as I interact with others.