**True Stories: Family Experiences and Inspirational Reading**

***Bloom: Finding Beauty in the Unexpected*** by Kelle Hampton

 “*Bloom* is an inspiring and heartfelt memoir that celebrates the beauty found in the unexpected, the strength of a mother’s love, and, ultimately, the amazing power of perspective. The author of the popular blog Enjoying the Small Things—named The Bump’s Best Special Needs Blog and The Blog You’ve Learned the Most From in the 2010 BlogLuxe Awards—Kelle Hampton interweaves lyrical prose and stunning four-color photography as she recounts the unforgettable story of the first year in the life of her daughter Nella, who has Down syndrome. Poignant, eye-opening, and heart-soaring, Hampton’s Bloom is ultimately about embracing life and really living it.”

***Expecting Adam: A True Story of Birth, Rebirth, and Everyday Magic*** by Martha Beck

 “*Expecting Adam* is an autobiographical tale of an academically oriented Harvard couple who conceive a baby with Down syndrome and decide to carry him to term. Despite everything Martha Beck and her husband John know about themselves and their belief system, when Martha gets accidentally pregnant and the fetus is discovered to have Down syndrome, the Becks find they cannot even consider abortion. The presence of the fetus that they each, privately, believe is a familiar being named Adam is too strong. As Martha's terribly difficult pregnancy progresses, odd coincidences and paranormal experiences begin to occur for both Martha and John, though for months they don't share them with each other. Martha's pregnancy and Adam (once born) become the catalyst for tremendous life changes for the Becks.”

***Roadmap to Holland: How I Found My Way Through My Son’s First Two Years With Down Syndrome*** by Jennifer Graf Groneberg

 “An exceptional memoir that provides emotional insight and practical advice.

*It's like planning a trip to Italy, only to get off the plane and discover you're actually in Holland. You need a new road map, and fast …*

When Jennifer Groneberg and her husband learned they'd be having twin boys, their main concern was whether they'd need an addition on their house. Then, five days after Avery and Bennett were born, Avery was diagnosed with Down syndrome. Here, Jennifer shares the story of what followed. She dealt with doctors-some who helped, and some who were disrespectful or even dangerous. She saw some relationships in her life grow stronger, while severing ties with people who proved unsupportive. And she continues to struggle to find balance in the hardships and joys of raising a child with special needs. This book is a resource, a companion for parents, and above all, a story of the love between a mother and her son-as she learns that Avery is exactly the child she never knew she wanted.”

***Gifts: Mothers Reflect on How Children with Down Syndrome Enrich Their Lives*** by Kathryn Lynard Soper

 “Having a baby with Down syndrome is not something most parents would willingly choose. Yet many who travel this path discover rich, unexpected rewards along the way. In this candid and poignant collection of personal stories, sixty-three mothers describe the gifts of respect, strength, delight, perspective, and love, which their child with Down syndrome has brought into their lives. The contributors to this collection have diverse personalities and perspectives, and draw from a wide spectrum of ethnicity, world views, and religious beliefs. Some are parenting within a traditional family structure; some are not. Some never considered terminating their pregnancy; some struggled with the decision. Some were calm at the time of diagnosis; some were traumatized. Some write about their pregnancy and the months after giving birth; some reflect on years of experience with their child. Their diverse experiences point to a common truth: The life of a child with Down syndrome is something to celebrate. These women have something to say--not just to other mothers but to all of us.”

***Gifts 2: How People With Down Syndrome Enrich the World*** by Kathryn Lynard Soper

 “Acceptance, courage, friendship, awareness, and joy--these are the gifts recounted in more than seventy inspirational essays included in *Gifts 2*. Edited by Kathryn Lynard Soper, the follow-up to the bestselling first volume, *Gifts 2* presents a broader perspective on Down syndrome and life by including passionate stories by siblings, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, as well as mothers of older children. Friends, teachers, medical professionals, and coaches also share the joys of knowing and caring for someone with Down syndrome. Like the previous book, *Gifts 2* helps us see that the hopes and dreams family and friends have for a child with Down syndrome are similar to the ones we have for any child. And, more often than not, expectations are fulfilled--if not always the way we anticipated they would be. A grandparent, inspired by his grandson's strong will, discovers the ability to persevere and not give up on a job. A brother who assumed he would be the person helping his sibling with Down syndrome describes how often it is the other way around. A young teacher remembers her first student with Down syndrome and it gives her strength and clarity when she is faced with her own child's diagnosis.”

***Count Us In: Growing Up With Down Syndrome*** by Jason Kingsley and Mitchell Levitz

 “At ages nineteen and twenty-two, respectively, Jason Kingsley and Mitchell Levitz shared their innermost thoughts, feelings, hopes, and dreams, their lifelong friendship—and their experiences growing up with Down syndrome. Their frank discussion of what mattered most in their lives—careers, friendships, school, sex, marriage, finances, politics, and independence—earned *Count Us In* numerous national awards, including the EDI Award from the National Easter Seal Society. More important, their wit, intelligence, candor, and charm made a powerful and inspirational statement about the full potential of people with developmental disabilities, challenging prevailing stereotypes.”

***Choosing Naia: A Family’s Journey*** by Mitchell Zuckoff

 “Halfway through their first pregnancy, Greg and Tierney Fairchild hear the news all expectant parents dread: their baby isn't perfect. A routine ultrasound reveals that the fetus Tierney carries has a major heart defect. Making matters worse, the nature of the defect leads doctors to suspect it might be a symptom of Down syndrome. With those events as its starting point, *Choosing Naia* examines the exploding world of prenatal information—and the emotional maelstrom that ensues from an unwanted test result—through the prism of the Fairchild family's experiences. Rapid advances in prenatal testing are enabling doctors to diagnose with great certainty a wide assortment of problems inside the womb. But that's where certainty ends. As they struggle with grief and confusion, would-be parents have only days or weeks to make choices—abortion, adoption, or continuing the pregnancy and keeping the child—whose reverberations are bound to alter the course of many lives. In the Fairchilds' case, those choices are further complicated by race. Having married across racial lines, Greg and Tierney can imagine the discrimination felt by the disabled. Ultimately, that understanding informs their decision about whether and how to parent a disabled child. Once the choice is made, they face a difficult delivery, where Tierney's vigilance literally saves her baby's life, and high-risk open-heart surgery before the baby they name Naia can celebrate her first birthday. After clearing those hurdles, the Fairchilds face new barriers they must tear down on behalf of their beloved child for all the days of their lives.”

***Angel Behind the Rocking Chair: Stories of Hope in Unexpected Places*** by Pamela W. Vredevelt

 “After the loss of her first baby and the birth of a fourth child with Down Syndrome, Pam Vredevelt felt that she had fallen from God's grasp. As she was soon to discover, however, God was just beginning to hold her tight and lead the way out of her endless pit of despair. With humor and touching insight, Pam unveils her struggle to emerge from darkness into the light in this paperback release of her popular work. Many have been touched by the same anguish; Pam shares their stories and how the supernatural touch of God sustained them through the darkest days of life.”

***Riding the Bus With My Sister: A True Life Journey*** by Rachel Simon

 “Rachel Simon's sister Beth is a spirited woman who lives intensely and often joyfully. Beth, who has an intellectual disability, spends her days riding the buses in her unnamed Pennsylvania city. The drivers, a lively group, are her mentors; her fellow passengers are her community. One day, Beth asks Rachel to accompany her on the buses for an entire year. This wise, funny, deeply affecting true story is the chronicle of that remarkable time. Rachel, a writer and college teacher whose hyperbusy life camouflaged her emotional isolation, had much to learn in her sister's extraordinary world. Elegantly woven throughout the odyssey are riveting memories of terrifying maternal abandonment, fierce sisterly loyalty, and astonishing forgiveness. Rachel Simon brings to light the almost invisible world of adults with developmental disabilities, finds unlikely heroes in everyday life, and, without sentimentality, portrays. Beth as the endearing, feisty, independent person she is. This heartwarming memoir about the unbreakable bond between two very different sisters takes the reader on an inspirational journey at once unique and universal.”

***Sometimes Miracles Hide: Stirring Letters from Those Who Discovered God’s Blessings in a Special Child*** by Bruce Carroll

 “This tremendously touching book was inspired by stirring letters Bruce Carroll received from those who were touched by his song "Sometimes Miracles Hide". These deeply moving letters of poured-out hearts and portraits of faith show how God took what was first perceived as bleak news and turned it into a miracle of discovery and devotion.”

***You will Dream New Dreams: Inspiring Personal Stories by Parents of Children with Disabilities*** edited by Stanley D. Klein, Ph.D. and Kim Schive

 “Knowing that "parents' strongest allies will always be other parents," Klein and Schive have collected from all over the country stories by parents of children with special needs. You Will Dream New Dreams is a remarkable parent's support group in print. The shared narratives come from those with newly diagnosed children, adult disabled children, and everything in between; their stories are short and unfold in plain language just what the parent suffering from informational and emotional overload needs. These experiences offer hope and encouragement and serve as a reminder that there are others out there who can help.”

***A Different Kind of Perfect: Writings by Parents on Raising a Child with Special Needs*** edited by Cindy Dowling and Bernadette Thomas

 “Every parent dreams of having a happy, healthy child. What happens when these dreams are shattered by a physical or cognitive disability? A Different Kind of Perfect offers comfort, consolation, and wisdom from parents who have been there—and are finding their way through. The writings collected here are grouped into chapters reflecting the progressive stages of many parents' emotional journeys, starting with grief, denial, and anger and moving towards acceptance, empowerment, laughter, and even joy. Each chapter opens with an introduction by Neil Nicoll, a child and family psychologist who specializes in development disorders.”

**Informational Publications**

***Babies with Down Syndrome: A New Parents’ Guide*** by Susan J. Skallerup

 “Babies with Down Syndrome, the trustworthy guide which has benefited thousands of families since it was first published in 1985, is completely revised and updated in a new, third edition. Covering the best practices for raising and caring for children with Down syndrome through age five, this book is invaluable to new parents who have welcomed a baby with Down syndrome into their lives. This new edition incorporates the latest scientific, medical, educational research, and practical information available, as well as parents' suggestions and feedback. Existing chapters have been revised, some completely rewritten by new authors, and in keeping with its parent-friendly reputation, most of the book's contributors are parents of children with Down syndrome.”

***Down Syndrome: Visions for the 21st Century*** by William I. Cohen, Lynn Nadel, Myra E. Madnick

 “Providing a comprehensive survey of the clinical, educational, developmental, psychosocial, and transitional issues relevant to people with Down syndrome, this book addresses the needs of family members, caregivers, and professionals alike. Edited in association with the National Down Syndrome Society, this up-to-date treatment incorporates the newest developments concerning sexuality, inclusion, transition into adulthood, and legislation, as well as a discussion of the Human Genome Project and the sequencing of chromosome 21.”

***Down Syndrome Parenting 101: Must-Have Advice for Making Your Life Easier*** by Natalie Hale

“*Down Syndrome Parenting 101* is a savvy book for parents, grandparents, teachers, and anyone who shares life with a person with Down syndrome! It's full of uplifting advice and best practices gleaned from the author's personal and professional experiences raising a son, now an adult, and teaching educators and parents how to teach children with Down syndrome to read. It offers inspired takes on a host of important issues, from learning to recognize and celebrate your child's personality and gifts to finding a great teacher for him, and from insisting your child pull his own weight to giving your child his space as an adult. The author--equal parts mentor, humorist, enthusiast, and realist--takes readers by the hand and walks them through the various life stages, experiences, and people they will encounter with their child including: getting to know and fall in love with your child, interacting with medical professionals, literacy, discipline, school, transitioning, and independence.”

**Fiction**

***The Memory Keeper’s Daughter*** by Kim Edwards

 “On a winter night in 1964, Dr. David Henry is forced by a blizzard to deliver his own twins. His son, born first, is perfectly healthy. Yet when his daughter is born, he sees immediately that she has Down syndrome. Rationalizing it as a need to protect Norah, his wife, he makes a split second decision that will alter all of their lives forever. He asks his nurse to take the baby away to an institution and never to reveal the secret. But Caroline, the nurse, cannot leave the infant. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child herself. So begins this beautifully told story that unfolds over a quarter of a century in which these two families, ignorant of each other, are yet bound by David Henry's fateful decision that long-ago winter night.”

***Jewel*** by Bret Lott

 “*Jewel* is the story of how quickly a life can change; how, like lightning, an unforeseen event can set us on a course without reason or compass. In the backwoods of Mississippi, a land of honeysuckle and grapevine, Jewel and her husband, Leston, are truly blessed; they have five fine children. When Brenda Kay is born in 1943, Jewel gives thanks for a healthy baby, last-born and most welcome. In this story of a woman's devotion to the child who is both her burden and God's singular way of smiling on her, Bret Lott has created a mother-daughter relationship of matchless intensity and beauty, and one of the finest, most indomitable heroines in contemporary American fiction.”

**Books for Children**

***We’ll Paint the Octopus Red*** by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen

 “As six-year-old Emma anticipates the birth of her new baby brother or sister, she vividly imagines all of the things they can do together. Emma feels ready to be a big sister! Then when the baby is born, her dad tells her that it's a boy and he has something called Down syndrome. Finally she asks, "If Isaac has this Down thing, then what can't he do?" Her dad thinks about it, then tells her that as long as they are patient with him, and help him when he needs it, there probably isn't anything Isaac can't do. In this touching story, Emma helps her father as much as he helps her to realize that Isaac is the baby they dreamed of. The book concludes with a set of commonly asked questions about Down syndrome with answers for children and how it might affect their sibling and family. For ages 3-7.”

***47 Strings: Tessa’s Special Code*** by Becky Carey

 “An invaluable tool for parents looking to talk about Down syndrome with their children. The book describes, in easy-to-understand language and with sensitivity, some of the challenges baby Tessa's special "code" might bring - while never losing focus on the message that a family's love is the same for everyone.”

***My Friend Isabelle*** by Eliza Woloson and Bryan Gough

 “Isabelle and Charlie are friends. They both like to draw, dance, read, and play at the park. They both like to eat Cheerios. They both cry if their feelings are hurt. And, like most friends, they are also different from each other. Isabelle has Down syndrome. Charlie doesn't. Written by Isabelle's mother, this charming tale encourages readers to think about what makes a friendship special. *My Friend Isabelle* also opens the door for young children to talk about differences and the world around them. It's a wonderful story to read at bedtime or to share at school. Lively full color illustrations dovetail beautifully with the text to bring the simple story to life.”

***My Friend Has Down Syndrome*** by Jennifer Moore-Mallinos

 “The sensitively written *Let's Talk About It Books* encourage preschool-age and early-grades children to explore their feelings, deal with problems that trouble them, and understand others who have problems of their own. Each title speaks to a particular concern that children might encounter in the course of growing up. All books in this series have appealing color illustrations on every page, and are available in both English and Spanish language editions. A short section at the back of each book offers related advice to parents. *My Friend Has Down Syndrome* explores this common chromosomal condition from a child's perspective. Younger children may be confused and have many questions when they encounter kids who have Down syndrome. Here, in this reassuring story, two children, one with Down syndrome and one without, learn that they are both good at different things and that by helping each other overcome their fears and difficulties they can accomplish a great deal together.”

***Radiance Descending*** by Paula Fox

 “*Radiance Descending* is a perceptive, sensitive story about per-teenager Paul Coleman, who is idolized by his brother Jacob, who has Down syndrome. When he sees all the attention which his parents and people in the neighborhood give to Jacob, eleven-year-old Paul struggles with his feelings toward this younger brother. Paul learns the true meaning of love when he gradually accepts his younger brother. The book captures, with unusual empathy, the conflicting emotions within a family.”