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# My Brain Won't Float Away/ Mi Cerebro No Va A Salir Flotando



## Synopsis

Annie, an eight-year-old girl, gathers the courage to ask her mother; Why is one of my hands smaller than the other? Why do I fall so much? What follows is a story of fears, will, self discovery, and finally, triumph. Annette Perez narrates her true story of growing up with hydrocephalus with humor, honesty, and compassion, and proves with this story that even the simplest act can change one's life forever.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 and up

Grade Level: 1 and up

## Customer Reviews

The story is not boringly didactic like some other books about children with disabilities and it does not play on sentimentality. Because the story is told from the perspective of Annie, the child with the disability, it gives the disabled child a voice. The character Annie is presented as more similar to other children than she is different; she is presented as an ordinary child learning to cope with the obstacles in her world. The author does a good job of portraying Annie as an active participant in life who is involved with other children with disabilities as well as with non-disabled children. The medical condition, hydrocephalus, is presented accurately as only one of Annie's important characteristics. A note from the author invites children to turn to the back of the book to read more facts about hydrocephalus in the form of a letter from Alexis, Annie's occupational therapist. The book also meets the basic criteria for good children's literature. The story is interesting and

understandable and the writing direct, straight-forward, and age-appropriate for the child. The artistic style is appropriate to the content. The illustrations are colorful, of high quality, and clarify and contribute to the reader's understanding of the issues. The pictures realistically portray Annie's disability, but they also show her individuality and personality. The illustrations also do a good job of presenting a racially diverse cast of characters. Annie seems to be the child of a single parent since her father does not appear in the pictures or the story, however, a father figure is presented in the form of Annie's encouraging male teacher. This is a well-written, optimistic book perfect for reading with a child who has been diagnosed with hydrocephalus or any other disability, whether physical, mental or learning. This is also a good book to introduce the topic of disabilities to non-disabled children. A wonderful addition to any bilingual library or classroom. Note: Much of the reviewer's analysis of this book was based directly on criteria outlined by Linda Lucas Walling, a leading authority on materials for and about children with disabilities. --Summer Edward for K12reader.com

ANNETTE PEREZ was born in New York City to a family of Puerto Rican origin. Annette was diagnosed with hydrocephalus as an infant. Growing up with this disability was not easy. Her childhood was filled with constant challenges, including learning how to tie her shoelaces one-handed. However, she considers herself among the lucky ones since she can function and live a normal life. Annette graduated from Borough of Manhattan Community College (City University of New York) with an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education, and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Spanish from York College. She is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education and Special Education (obviously, her brain did not float away!) She lives in Queens, New York. This is her first book, lovingly dedicated to her parents.

This book is a wonderful way to describe hydrocephalus to a child in BOTH English and Spanish. Our daughter's Principal ordered a copy for their library at school, then I bought one for each of my hydro girls and one for our Neuro surgeon's office. The only thing I would have liked to see added was a description of a shunt.

This was a nicely written and semi helpful book I suppose for some. My son loves books however this one he did not for some reason. I am not sure if it is just he did not relate to the character because unlike her he has more issues associated with his hydrocephalus than she does. It is a nice book though and the message is a good one as well so I would recommend this however my son just did not care for it much.

A BOOK EVERY CHILD (AND PARENT) SHOULD READ By Constance Castaneda, Speech and language pathologist, New York

Imagine that you are born with a disability that affects your motor skills and makes your body do odd things. It makes one of your hands smaller than the other and nearly useless, and makes one of your legs weaker. Imagine that due to this condition, simple tasks become difficult and hard tasks become practically impossible. What if that disability made you the target of ridicule as a child, and now as an adult it still makes people stare at you, or pretend not to see you when you walk down the street? What would you do? Perhaps you should do what Annette Perez did; you write a funny, uplifting children's book about your experiences. The New York City native of Puerto Rican descent, and York College (City University of New York) graduate, just released a children's book titled *My Brain Won't Float Away* (Campanita Books, New York) based on one key event in her childhood that changed her life forever, for the better I should add. It's the story of Annie, an eight-year-old girl who, realizing there is something "wrong" with her, gathers the courage to ask her mom what is going on, leaving her mother with the tough job of explaining to her daughter that she has a condition called hydrocephalus (also referred to as "water on the brain," even though as you learn in the book, it has nothing to do with water). Her first reaction, as I am sure we all can imagine, is fear. Annie is scared of that strange-sounding label her mother has just placed on her, and terrified when she hears that she has "water on the brain." But knowledge is usually a good way to dispel fear, and with her newfound information Annie embarks on a journey of discovery that teaches her about hydrocephalus, but also teaches her about love, friendship, and courage. The book is a pleasure to read, and Ms. Pérez gives Annie a voice that sounds fresh, and authentic. As a person with a disability, she knows first-hand the daily struggle that so many adults and children have to go through to do what most of us take for granted. She writes about the time and determination that it takes to learn to live with a body that sometimes will not, and at other times cannot do what you wish it to do. And she does it while telling a story that reads more like an adventure (which it is). That she also writes on the subject of being ostracized as a child for being "different" and how important it was for her physical and emotional well-being to be accepted by her peers, is a lesson that any child reading the book will relate to, without the need for lectures or a preachy tone. You have to read the book to understand how well it was written, and how much fun it is. Yes, fun. Ms. Pérez, who based the story on her own experiences growing up with hydrocephalus has covered so many bases that it feels like *My Brain Won't Float Away* is the only book that you'll need to buy for your kid this year. Funny? Yes. Suspenseful? Yes. Uplifting? Yes. Educational? Yes. Does it help you practice a foreign language? ~~Yes~~ ! I forgot to mention,

My Brain Won't Float Away is also called *Mi cerebro no va a salir flotando*. The book is 100% bilingual in English and Spanish! That means it is also a perfect tool for any bilingual program. And it is a jewel in any language. Recommended for all Parents, Elementary Teachers, Special Education Teachers, ESL Teachers, Librarians, Counselors, and Occupational Therapists. A must have for Character Education Curriculum Collections. Children 6 to 10

WOW! There's another book, "Damn! Why Didn't I Write That?" which is what I was thinking when I read this book. It does an awesome job of telling a kid's view of having a very misunderstood condition and the fears that so often accompany a young mind when questions are unasked and unanswered. I spent my entire childhood terrified that "hydro" was something no one else had, and as I grew older, still without info, I indeed feared it would kill me. Perez does a beautiful job of explaining from an 8 yo point of view what it's like to live with a "difference" and the often-resulting ignorance and ostracism from peers. The book is written with true empathy for the child who has determined that s/he is "different" and in need of honesty and help with issues related to hydrocephalus. I have some similar issues to the ones she does (weak, short leg due to long-undiagnosed and untreated hip dysplasia and scoliosis), and it was refreshing to see physical issues brought up in the story. I just wish I'd had this book 35 years ago! It's a must for every parent who has a child with "hydro." There is a mention of a term that often bothers those of us who have/love someone who has hydro: "water on the brain." In this context, though, it works, as "Annie's" mom says that it's the simplest way to explain "hydro" to her. There is a more sophisticated explanation at the end of the book. Thank you, Annette, for this wonderful book! My 14 yo son is autistic, and I really needed something more in-depth and "older" than the Barney the Beagle book. Even another book I also love, "All About Me (and My Shunt)" doesn't go into quite as much detail, so even though he'll also outgrow this one, I think it's a valuable tool to help him understand Mom's brain. Please consider writing additional books for older children. You have a true gift!

This is a wonderfully written book. There are so many features that make this book to be owned by anybody. For one, the book is bilingual. You can read the Spanish portion and learn from the English text as you go along. The pictures in the book, make this a book that is fun while dealing with serious content. And once you read this book, you will forever remember Annie. Her story is uplifting and helps reinforce the idea that no matter what differences we may have, with help and the will to overcome challenges, we can use our differences to better ourselves. This is a great book

for the classroom and is a wonderful resource for anybody wanting to learn a little bit about a condition called hydrocephalus. Once you read this book, you will want all your friends and family to read it as well.

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