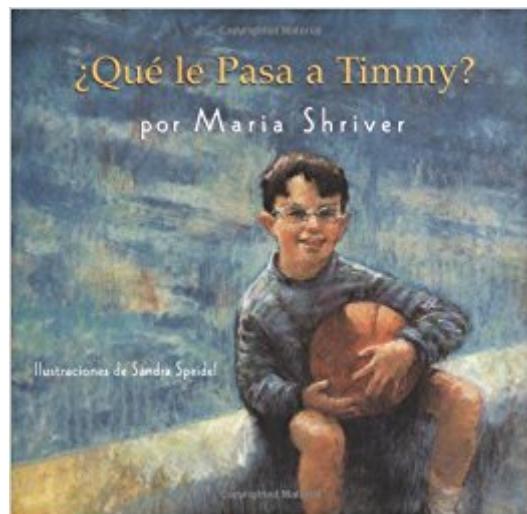


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# Que Le Pasa A Timmy?



## Synopsis

When 8-year-old Kate meets a boy who seems somehow different, she feels funny inside. After talking with her mom, though, Kate begins to understand that Timmy is just like her in many ways. Timmy has special needs; he takes longer to learn than Kate, and can't walk or run as well. But he also "loves his family, he wants friends, he goes to school, and he dreams about what he wants to be when he grows up." Kate and Timmy meet, and the seeds of a friendship are planted. For all those children who ask their parents why someone looks or acts "different," author and journalist Maria Shriver's *What's Wrong with Timmy?* provides a base for discussion. Kate's mother models appropriate behavior, speaking to her daughter calmly and directly, and providing examples from her own life to help Kate understand about Timmy. Illustrator Sandra Speidel's soft, intentionally hazy pastels are lovely; bold, enlarged phrases on the opposite pages of text act as captions. Shriver and Speidel collaborated previously on the tremendously popular *What's Heaven?*, also starring Kate and her mother. (Ages 4 to 8) --Emilie Coulter

## Book Information

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Age Range: 9 and up

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## Customer Reviews

When 8-year-old Kate meets a boy who seems somehow different, she feels funny inside. After talking with her mom, though, Kate begins to understand that Timmy is just like her in many ways. Timmy has special needs; he takes longer to learn than Kate, and can't walk or run as well. But he

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Gr 3-5-This brief book tells of the meeting in the park between an eight-year-old girl and the "mentally retarded" son of her mother's friend. The writer describes Timmy as someone who "looked different" and has a face that seems "flatter" than other children's. Kate asks her mother about the boy and learns that he is her age and was born with disabilities. The children discover that they like the same things at school, recess and sports, and don't like math. After a game of basketball with her friends, Timmy and Kate make a play date. The warm pastel illustrations support the theme of acceptance of all people no matter their differences. However, the little girl's questions and actions are quite mature for her age. The lack of paragraphs might be a bit confusing to young readers, and the intermittent use of bold-faced, larger-sized type is a bit disruptive, although its purpose seems to be to highlight the theme. The book reads well, though, and would be a good introduction for youngsters welcoming a disabled child into their school or neighborhood. Margaret C. Howell, West Springfield Elementary School, VA  
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I am a Lutheran Church librarian in Florida who bought this book for our church library. It stresses that though we may have different traits and characteristics we are all worthy of love, respect and human dignity. It discusses a mentally-challenged little boy and how he can be a good playmate even though he is a little slow. So what? He is still a person worthy of dignity and acceptance. This book stresses kindness on a personal level and a live-and-let-live attitude. This is a vital life lesson for our children to learn early on, and is a great conversation starter. This book will help cut down on bullying, marginalization and dehumanization of the mentally and physically challenged among us. After all, who among us does not have some sort of shortcoming? Children need to know that

perfection is an impossibility and so they should expect people to do the best job they can but not expect perfection in themselves or others. The illustrations appear to be done in pastels and are very attractive. Great Job, Maria! Keep them coming!

great to read to little ones.

Service was prompt and easy. I have a brother who has Down's. Will pass this book on to my granddaughters after reading.

As a mother of a four year old little girl with Down Syndrome, I find it offensive and ignorant on the part of the author to use the word 'retarded' in this day and age. As a parent of a child with special needs, we fight a hard uphill battle to educate people of the hurtful use of the word "retarded". I would advice the author on her next book to use intellectual disability or maybe that the child just has some special needs, why do we have to label a child.

Why are we referring to Timmy as "mentally retarded" this is not a current medical OR politically correct term and is spreading ignorance to the next generation. This book sucks.

A very sensitively written book for children. Children have a great capacity for liking other children, looking for their companionship, for their trust. Very much like their parents, the "older" children. (Except Mom and Dad are very wary of their peers, in that "trust" department). What I find a little awkward here - maybe I have to re-read the book three times - is why Kate would be that mystified by another kid whose only outward sign of "slowness" is just that he spends more time with his Mother than other kids. Also, a girl under 10 is not very inclined to seek out \*boy\* friends. She might enjoy being with him, just...\*like\* him...but would not spend a lot of time deciding whether to add the boy to her group. In the end, the book is more about her adjustment to him. I did not sense any adjustment of Timmy to...her. Timmy, inside, is the same as Kate. Still, the work is moving. I may look out for several more in this series. Artwork wonderful.

I was very curious to read this title from Maria Shriver knowing her family background with people with special needs. My brother has Down's Syndrome, so I know what it is to be on the receiving end of other children looking at my brother and wondering (sometimes out loud and sometimes in facial expression, stares and body language) wondering "What's wrong with him?" Recently one little girl

asked my daughter, "Why is your uncle so freaky?" These are truths: that people "in the world" don't always use politically correct terms... not by a long shot... and as fellow citizens we can educate those who have not yet learned some of the simple truths this book teaches. One warning (to those who do not share this view) the book takes a very spiritual stance in its explanations. Another shortcoming is overcome very simply. Each page has quite a bit of text and I thought, "This is way too much on a page to teach the very littlest children who really need the lessons the most" and then I saw the bolded, larger words on each page could be the only words read. Those words would be enough for the littlest ones to understand the message of the book. It would be tough to write a perfect book on this subject that pleases everyone. This book makes a sincere effort and will be helpful for many who read it.

Maria Shriver's attempt to assist children deal with their uncomfortability with someone with Down Syndrome or a wheelchair is a fair attempt. I have a child with Down's. I thought more of Timmy's strengths could be featured, for example, the high emotional and social intelligence, perseverance, courage, tolerance and forgiveness. It could focus on the child's abilities. Nevertheless, this is a much needed book. I did like the way Shriver made the key thoughts in large print for the younger readers. This book seemed too wordy for very young children. I'm thinking it would appeal to 5th and 6th graders. Preschool and kindergarten would be great times to introduce this theme--before biases and fears set in. The book is excellent for a child who has someone different in their life. It is a marvelous book for assisting children in understanding and dealing with their uncomfortability about their queezy reactions to children of difference. If reading it to a younger child, unless your child is especially precocious and patient, summarize the pages to about 1/2 the words. The concepts are great- It would be nice to complete the reading of this book by including a list of all the ways a special child is abled. Perhaps your child could make a list of the able qualities of the child they know who heroically and daily overcome the fears of others and a life with more hardship. They could also acknowledge and appreciate their gifts of walking, running, speaking etc. KW

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