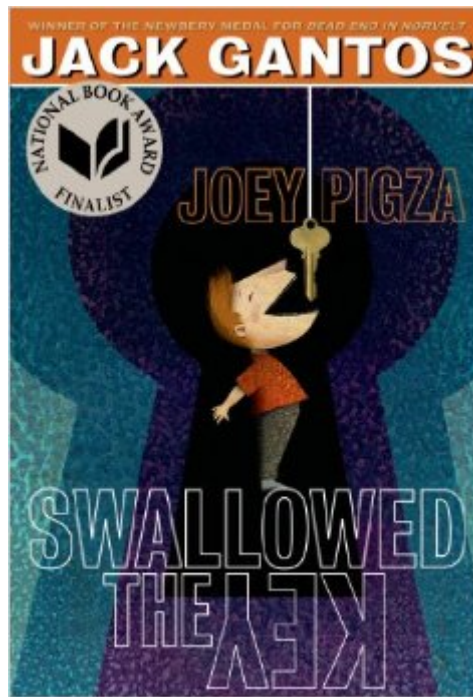


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# Joey Pigza Swallowed The Key



## Synopsis

"They say I'm wired bad, or wired sad, but there's no doubt about it - I'm wired." Joey Pigza's got heart, he's got a mom who loves him, and he's got "dud meds," which is what he calls the Ritalin pills that are supposed to even out his wild mood swings. Sometimes Joey makes bad choices. He learns the hard way that he shouldn't stick his finger in the pencil sharpener, or swallow his house key, or run with scissors. Joey ends up bouncing around a lot - and eventually he bounces himself all the way downtown, into the district special-ed program, which could be the end of the line. As Joey knows, if he keeps making bad choices, he could just fall between the cracks for good. But he is determined not to let that happen. In this antic yet poignant new novel, Jack Gantos has perfect pitch in capturing the humor, the off-the-wall intensity, and the serious challenges that life presents to a kid dealing with hyper-activity and related disorders. This title has Common Core connections. Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key is a 1998 National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature.

## Book Information

Series: Joey Pigza (Book 1)

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Square Fish; Reissue edition (July 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1250061687

ISBN-13: 978-1250061683

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (335 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #6,879 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Special Needs](#) #9 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Parents](#) #23 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Humorous](#)

## Customer Reviews

As an elementary school librarian, who was diagnosed as an adult with ADHD, and who lives in a household with other ADHD people, I highly recommend this book! "Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key," is a fast-paced novel written at about the 5th grade level. Since we acquired two copies in our library about a month ago, it has been constantly checked out! I've had a student and his mom come into

the library specifically to thank me for bringing this book to their attention and for discussing it with the his sixth grade class. If you want to crawl into the mind and body of a youngster with attention problems, spend some time with "Joey Pigza." What this kid does with his body, I've done in my mind my entire life, and I'm thankful to a number of medical professionals for helping me discover that I really was "wired" differently. (The book that really got me to seek help was "Driven to Distraction," by Edward M. Hallowell, which I also highly recommend.) The reviewer who attributes Joey's problems to his physical environment, overstates the situation. Yes, diet, chemicals and emotional problems can contribute to attention problems, but as a person who has eaten healthy foods for many years, and who has very few chemicals in the home, I can attest that ADD/ADHD people are usually born this way. I found relief through meds. Last year, I secretly took myself off the meds, and people around me noticed the difference within weeks. So, now I know it really does make a difference. Some people are misdiagnosed or over-medicated, which is why it's important to see a doctor who knows this disorder inside and out, like Joey finally did at the end of the book. This book should be read by any students, teachers or parents who either have attention problems, or who know someone who does. It would make an excellent read-aloud and discussion starter in an upper elementary classroom.

Joey Pigza is not your average kid. He is a very annoying kid because he always challenges his teacher, Mrs. Maxy by doing really bad things. He also comes up with some very weird theories about himself being like the Tasmanian Devil. Joey Pigza can't stand still. He can't pay attention, he can't follow the rules, and he can't help it- especially when his meds aren't working. Joey's had problems ever since he was born, problems just like his Dad and Grandpa have. And whether he's wreaking havoc on a class trip or swallowing his house key, Joey's problems are getting worse. In fact, his behavior is so bad his teachers are threatening to send him to the special-ed center downtown. To find out if they do or do not send him there, you have to read this fantastic book. Joey knows he's a really good kid but no matter how hard he tries to do the right thing something always seems to go wrong. Will he ever get anything right? Nominations & Awards: Finalist, 1998 National Book Award for Children's Literature Notable Children's Books of 1999 (ALA) Notable 1999 Children's Trade Book in Social Studies (NCSS/CBC)

As a teacher and the mother of a son with ADHD I was immediately drawn to this book. Yes, there are difficult passages that make us want to look away from the character, but the character, like a real-life ADHD child cannot step away. My son is now 20 years old and had a horrible time making

friends in school, for many of the same reasons as Joey. He attests to the authenticity of feelings and the impulsiveness of actions that send Joey "pinging off the walls of his life." (Geof's words, not mine) I highly recommend this book for anyone who has ever come in contact with an ADHD child and wants to understand a little more about the illness.

As a new elementary teacher, I stumbled on this book because of its interesting title. I couldn't put it down because it drew me in instantly. I felt sorry for Joey, but I was amazed how different his experience appeared from his point of view than what I might see as a teacher. A must read for teachers, parents, and children!

I have never before such an honest and believable description of a child with ADD. This book is almost painful to read, but I couldn't put it down, and I still think about it, months later. For anyone who knows somebody with ADD, this book opens up a whole new world of understanding. The best book, for children or adults, that I have read all year.

This novel takes the reader inside the head of a hyperactive boy, whose hyperactivity is as much or more propelled by his running away from early abandonment as it is by his biochemistry. Though authors often try to take us inside the mind of a person very different from ourselves, success at the level of JOEY PIGZA SWALLOWED THE KEY is extremely rare. In this novel the energy of the prose conveys both the protagonist's activity and his thought processes, as he runs away from unbearable moments in his past with both comic and tragic consequences. The sources of Joey's problems are deftly sketched in a way that deepens the story immensely without forcing young readers to dwell on the moments of horror in Joey's past. A masterful work that will foster empathy in young readers and help them to understand how somebody who, like Joey, is a problem--can also be most loveable and in the deepest ways, very like themselves.

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