

**The Misunderstood Child** A poem about children with hidden disabilities  
by Kathy Winters

I am the child that looks healthy and fine. I was born with ten fingers and toes. But something is different, somewhere in my mind, And what it is, nobody knows.

I am the child that struggles in school, Though they say that I'm perfectly smart. They tell me I'm lazy -- can learn if I try -- But I don't seem to know where to start.

I am the child that won't wear the clothes Which hurt me or bother my feet. I dread sudden noises, can't handle most smells, And tastes -- there are few foods I'll eat.

I am the child that can't catch the ball And runs with an awkward gait. I am the one chosen last on the team And I cringe as I stand there and wait.

I am the child with whom no one will play -- The one that gets bullied and teased. I try to fit in and I want to be liked, But nothing I do seems to please.

I am the child that tantrums and freaks Over things that seem petty and trite. You'll never know how I panic inside, When I'm lost in my anger and fright.

I am the child that fidgets and squirms Though I'm told to sit still and be good. Do you think that I choose to be out of control? Don't you know that I would if I could?

I am the child with the broken heart Though I act like I don't really care. Perhaps there's a reason God made me this way -- Some message he sent me to share.

For I am the child that needs to be loved And accepted and valued too. I am the child that is misunderstood. I am different - but look just like you.