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A developmental pediatrician who has worked with children on the autism spectrum for more than 30 years, Coplan presents a detailed analysis of the disorder. In Part I, the author discusses the causes and symptoms. Part II focuses on treatment, including a thorough examination of behavior management techniques and medications, and in Part III the focus is on the family as the child ages. The sibling of an individual with special needs, Coplan has a compassionate voice and a keen understanding of the devastation parents feel upon learning of their child's diagnosis, but he is also determined to confront "sense and nonsense" in autism treatment. He questions the popular theory of a connection to gluten, refutes the assertion that autism results from the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, and argues that while the prevalence of autism is certainly on the rise because of broadening definitions and changes in federal education law, there is not an "epidemic," as many claim. Though pragmatic, Coplan maintains a hopeful tone; he points out that autism often has a "natural history of improvement over time" and predicts scientific progress as well. This is a comprehensive text dealing with a complex disorder, but it's Coplan's worthy contention that the more parents understand, the better advocates they will be for their child.