The loveable, disaster-prone hero of Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key is back, this time in charge of his attention deficit disorder and ready to greet the world as a normal kid—with the help of his new and improved meds, of course. Now that Joey has a handle on his actions, he feels prepared to face the most mysterious member of his family—his estranged father, Carter Pigza. He convinces his skeptical mom to let him spend part of his summer vacation getting to know his dad again. The only problem is that Joeys dad is just as wired as Joey used to be: I looked over at his mouth, which never seemed to close—not even the lips touched together—and it made me dizzy to listen to him. Carter believes that Joey can kick his ADD the way he himself kicked alcoholism—cold turkey. But when Carter flushes his meds, Joey has to decide if being friends with his dad is worth losing his hard-won self-control. That old Joey was coming to get me and I couldnt do anything about it... I closed my eyes and told myself to sleep while I could. Jack Gantoss second book about Joey Pigza is just as delightful and soulful as his first. Joeys attempts to keep the fragile peace in his life intact are touching, and his intense longing to just be normal will mirror the feelings of most preteens, whether they have ADD or not. Joey Pigza may sometimes lose control, but he never loses his heart. This is an exceptional sequel. (Ages 10 and older) --Jennifer Hubert

My Personal Review:
Sometimes to get my kids interested in a book, I will read aloud the first 2-3 chapters, set it down, and when I look at them later, invariably one child has his/her nose stuck in the book. While I was reading this one to my son, I was thinking, He wont pick this one up, too much description, really weird old grandmother, no excitement, his Dads storybook land metaphors wont sink in... but in fact, he did pick it up and he read it in one fell swoop.

He loved it! I think he identified with Joey, and was very interested in his thoughts. He was fascinated by J0eys grandmother who could barely breath but still packed away cigarettes.
But the character he thought about and talked about most, who brought him to tears, was Joeys dad. Joeys dad shares some of his ADHD tendencies and is trying to improve his life. The contrast between his high hopes in the beginning, when he is trying to make it up to Joey and talks to him in Storybook land about his epiphanies, and the ending, when he starts drinking again and things start falling apart for him (although he has a fabulous girlfriend who is still with him at the very end), was very hard for my son to deal with. Also the idea that parents who love their kids can sometimes make bad choices for those kids, like when Joeys dad tosses Joeys medicine down the toilet, was one that concerned him. The last chapter, when Joey drives away with his mom without saying goodbye to his dad, leaving his fathers dreams and hopes for the family (not all entirely realistic) shattered, was extremely sad to my son. I actually viewed it as a happy ending, Joey is going someplace safe, he learned a lot about his dad and knows he loves him, his dad can try again to pull himself together.

Well anyway. I recommend this to upper elementary/middle school kids who like modern, realistic stories about kids in less than ideal circumstances who somehow persevere.

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Joey Pigza Loses Control by Jack Gantos - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!