



# What About the Siblings?

Supporting Siblings of Children with Disabilities



Siblings are the largest group of people living alongside disability, yet their experiences are often overlooked.

This resource highlights:

- **challenges** siblings may face
- **strengths** many develop
- ways families can **support** them



*A Caregiver Resource by 2villages*



[www.2villages.life](http://www.2villages.life)



# Why Siblings Matter



Siblings make up the **largest group of people living alongside children with disabilities.**

Their experiences shape how they see:

- themselves
- their family
- and the world around them.

When we support siblings, we strengthen the **entire family system.**





# Challenges Siblings May Face



Siblings may:

- **Feel left out** when attention is focused on their brother or sister
  - Experience **guilt, worry, jealousy, or resentment**
  - Take on **extra responsibility** or “parentified” roles
  - Feel **anxiety** about the future
  - Experience **stigma** or embarrassment in social situations

These experiences are common, and deserve understanding and support.



# Strengths Many Siblings Develop



Growing up alongside disability can also nurture powerful strengths.

Many siblings develop:

- Deep **empathy** and compassion
- Maturity and **responsibility**
- Strong **protective** bonds with their sibling
- **Resilience** and adaptability
- A passion for advocacy and **inclusion**





# Ways to Support Siblings

Small intentional actions can make a **big difference.**



- **One-on-One Time**

Create regular moments just for them.

- **Open Conversations**

Explain the disability in age-appropriate ways.

- **Validate Feelings**

Let them know all emotions are normal.

- **Include Them**

Invite participation, but don't pressure.





# More Ways to Support

Additional Ways to Support Siblings



- **Celebrate Them**

Notice their interests, milestones, and achievements.

- **Plan Ahead**

Talk about the future so worries don't build in silence.

- **Peer Support**

Connect with sibling programs or groups

- **Watch for Signs**

Seek professional help if stress, sadness, or anxiety persist.



# Siblings carry both unique challenges and powerful strengths.



With intentional support,  
they can thrive,  
and the entire family grows  
stronger.

