

SUPPORTING SIBLINGS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

WHY IT MATTERS

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.



CHALLENGES SIBLINGS FACE

- May feel left out when attention is focused on their brother/sister.
- Can experience guilt, worry, jealousy, or resentment.
- Risk of anxiety, stress, or “parentified” roles.
- Sometimes face stigma or embarrassment in social settings.



SIBLINGS' STRENGTHS

- Develop deep empathy and compassion.
- Show maturity, responsibility, and resilience.
- Build strong protective bonds with their sibling.
- Often grow into advocates and leaders.



WAYS TO SUPPORT SIBLINGS

- **One-on-One Time** → Schedule regular moments just for them.
- **Open Conversations** → Explain the disability in age-appropriate ways.
- **Validate Feelings** → Let them know all emotions (even hard ones) are normal.
- **Include Them** → Invite — but don't pressure — them to help or participate.
- **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 programs like Sibshops or sibling groups.
- **Watch for Signs** → Seek professional help if stress or sadness lingers.



Siblings carry both unique challenges and powerful strengths. With intentional support, they can thrive — and the whole family grows stronger.

