

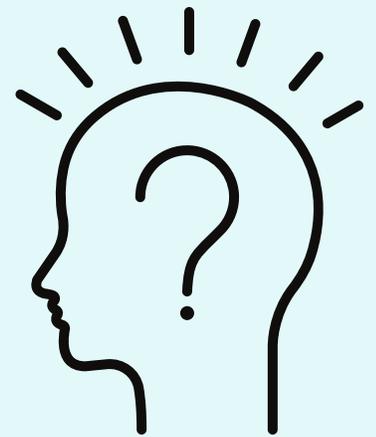
Remember & Read: Supporting Siblings through the COVID-19 Pandemic

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While families are inside to stay protected against COVID-19, daily stressors and challenges multiply. It can be difficult to spend time individually with each child, especially when there is a child with autism in the family. Below are some quick tips to support siblings through challenging times. The first section of this resource, "Remember", lists a few things to keep in mind while supporting siblings. Part two, "Read", includes a list of books that could be helpful in supporting siblings.

Remember:

- Sometimes special needs siblings feel confused as to their role in the family. They can unintentionally get overlooked, are expected to always be on their best behavior, and are given higher expectations. One way to make them feel included is to give the sibling a job that involves doing something positive with/for their sibling with special needs. Example: The special needs child has a security toy. The sibling's job is to make sure that special toy doesn't get misplaced. If it does get misplaced, maybe the sibling can lead a search party to help find it!
- Siblings can act out from family dynamic stress. Be sure to interact with them often during tense times. For example: "I love you. I can see that you're upset. Yelling is not solving things. How can we work together as a team, so that it doesn't get to this level next time?"
- When the sibling doesn't follow a boundary, be supportive, yet consistent with consequences. Help them understand the rule and the behavior. For example: "I appreciate that we talked about what was going wrong, however, I have to remind you that the 30 minutes of lost computer time still stands."
- Just like you, siblings get stressed, tired, and require extra support. It's very important to take the time to acknowledge the sibling and his/her thoughts, stressors, and needs. Aim for at least one, one-on-one, undivided attention to the sibling daily. Also, try and plan at least one monthly activity with the sibling. For example, cooking together, arts and crafts, or a day outdoors doing something fun.
- Give praise to the sibling often. Even the small things count! Make sure to be specific with your praise when they are doing things right. An example would be, "Today, you were very patient and caring. I really appreciate your help while we were participating in an online telehealth visit."



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Below is a list of books that could potentially be helpful in teaching and supporting a sibling of an individual with autism:

Read:

- *When my Worries get too Big- A Relaxation Book for Children Who Live with Anxiety*; Kari Dunn Buron
- *Rules*; Cynthia Lord
- *Views from our Shoes-Growing up with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs*; Donald Joseph Meyer
- *In My Mind-The World through the Eyes of Autism*; Adonya Wong
- *What about Me? A Book For and By An Autism Sibling*; Brennan Farmer
- *A is for Autism, F is for Friend-A Kid's Book on Making Friends with a Child who has Autism*; Joanna L. Keating-Velasco
- *My Sister has Autism*; Stephanie & Sherry Ham
- *The Friendship Puzzle*; Julie L. Coe
- *Ben has Autism. Ben is Awesome*; Meredith Zolty
- *Autism, the Invisible Cord A Siblings Diary*; Barbara S. Cain
- *The Ride Together: A Brother and Sister's Memoir of Autism in the Family*; Paul Karasik and Judy Karasik
- *Special People Special Ways*; Arlene Maguire
- *Siblings of Children with Autism: A Guide for Families*; Sandra L. Harris
- *Sometimes My Brother: Helping Kids Understand Autism Through a Sibling's Eyes*; Angie Healy

