

Special Sibs Tips

Lessons learned from autism siblings.

1. Revisit "Normal"

As parents, it's natural to want to make things as "normal" as possible for your family. But to the sibs, it's obvious their family is anything but. So create your "new normal" together, intentionally, and decide what it will look like for your family.

2. Check In

Have a conversation with the sibs in your house, individually, about how they're doing, and if their needs are being met. Then brainstorm about ways they could be met more effectively. Don't forget to ask them, "How am I doing?" so you can find out how they view your parenting efforts.

3. Validate

When your child tells you how they feel, resist the urge to "fix it." or try to convince them to feel differently. Validate their feelings instead. Saying things like, "Tell me more," or "It sounds like..." are great ways to validate their feelings.

4. Their Struggles are Unique

Recognize that their experience is unique to them, and you may not be able to relate—even though you live under the same roof. Allow them to have their own experience. And remember, their experience will change as they grow and mature.

5. Get Professional Help

If there's one thing I've learned, it's that you can't do autism alone. Family and/or individual counseling can make a huge difference in the way you, your child, and your spouse handle the stress in your household.

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