

Sibling Support

Regardless of their age, siblings of children with a chronic health condition or a life-changing injury will also need your understanding and your support.

Siblings need you to:

- Recognize and accept their emotions.
- Provide information about their sibling's diagnosis, injury, etc.
- Create a stable home environment with routines and boundaries.



Toddlers and Preschoolers

Please keep in mind that as siblings grow their needs and the type of support they require will change.

Resources to Support Siblings

Cook Children's Sib2Sib Program™ offers siblings the opportunity to:

- Recognize their unique qualities and gifts.
- Have fun outside of their daily routines.
- Be supported by encouraging adults.
- Express their feelings about having chronically ill brothers or sisters.
- Build relationships with other siblings who are going through similar situations.



School-age

The Sibling Support Project – A resource for siblings of all ages: (<https://siblingssupport.org>).

To Request Support for Siblings

Send us a note at sibprogram@cookchildrens.org or ask to speak with a child life specialist.

You can request individual time for you or the brothers and sisters to meet with a child life specialist about specific sibling concerns or needs.

- If you are away from the hospital, we would be happy to talk with you over the phone.
- Ask a member of your child's medical team to connect you with a child life specialist or call the Child Life department at 682-885-4048.

Books for siblings

- "Just Because" by Rebecca Elliott ... Ages 3+
- "Sometimes" by Rebecca Elliott ... Ages 5-7
- "Hi, My Name is Jack" by Christina Beall-Sullivan ... Ages 3-12
- "Views from Our Shoes: Growing Up with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs" By Donald Joseph Meyer ... Ages 9-12
- "The Sibling Slam Book: What It's Really Like To Have A Brother Or Sister With Special Needs" by Don Meyer ... Tweens and Teens



Teens

Sibling Support: School-age

Ages 5 years to 12 years

Common Behaviors/Reactions	How you can help
<p>Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this age, children are able to understand more about their sibling's diagnosis. They may be interested in learning more about their sibling's diagnosis and care. 	<p>Provide concrete explanations to help children understand their sibling's diagnosis and care.</p> <p>Look for kid-friendly videos or books that can help them learn.</p>
<p>Misconceptions and Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may have overheard information at home and at doctor's visits. They may form their own beliefs or ideas about their sibling's diagnosis that are not accurate. They may have unanswered questions. 	<p>Ask them what they already know or have heard about their sibling's diagnosis.</p> <p>Check in with them to see what questions they have about their sibling's diagnosis and care. Keep in mind that they may have new questions that come up as time passes.</p>
<p>Social Interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classmates and others may have questions for children about their sibling. Children may not be certain how to respond to these questions. 	<p>Practice answering potential questions from friends, classmates, and community members.</p>
<p>Developing Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children need opportunities to develop friendships and skills through school and extracurricular activities. 	<p>If you need to set a limit on the number of school and extracurricular activities, allow children to choose which activities are most important to them.</p>
<p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some children may try to take on more responsibility, either "bossing" their siblings around or doing everything for their sibling as if they are another parent. 	<p>Offer children an age-appropriate way to help with their sibling.</p> <p>The goal is for children to feel included but not to take on more responsibility than is appropriate for their age.</p>
<p>Mixed Feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may feel lots of different emotions – jealousy, worry, anger, and guilt are some examples. 	<p>Acknowledge all of the different emotions they may have and things that contribute to those feelings. Support children in finding healthy ways to cope with these emotions.</p>



These instructions are only general guidelines. Your health care providers may give you special instructions. If you have any questions or concerns, please call your health care providers.

