

## Supporting Siblings

Disability affects the whole family. So, all family members need support.

Discover three ways that churches can support siblings.

### 3 Ways to Support Siblings

**1. Don't Make Siblings Feel Responsible** - It can be easy to look to siblings for help with a student who has a disability. But, when it comes to church, siblings should just be able to be kids like everyone else. So, if you need advice, ask the parents. If you need a buddy, give that blessing to someone else in the church. Remember, that sometimes the best way to care for a child is to just let them be a child.

**2. Allow Siblings to be Honest** - Sibling relationships are special, but they can also be complicated. When a child has a brother or a sister with a disability, it is important that they feel like they have a safe place to be heard and understood, not judged, when they share their feelings. One of the best ways to support siblings is to host a Sibling Support Group at your church. Check out [siblingsupport.org/sibshops/](http://siblingsupport.org/sibshops/) to learn more.

**3. Be the Church** - When one child in the family has significant needs, parents often have to give most of their attention there, especially during times of crisis. This can be hard on siblings. A great way to support them (and the whole family) is by offering tangible help. Here are a few ideas:

- Drop off and pick them up from activities so they don't have to miss them, even if their brother or sister has an important appointment at the same time.
- Take them out to do something fun.
- Send sibling care packages.
- Go to their games, recitals and other events when their parents can't.
- Give them a chance to feel seen by asking about their activities and interests.

**One More Thing...** Remember, if students who have a disability cannot be part of your church, neither will their siblings. Disability ministry supports the **WHOLE FAMILY!**