



The Importance of Early Counseling for Siblings

Even when siblings appear to be coping well, early counseling plays a vital role in supporting their long-term emotional health. Rather than signaling that something is wrong, counseling serves as preventive support. It also helps prepare siblings for future developmental changes and reassures them that adults are proactively planning for their safety and support.

Why Early Counseling Matters

- Children often lack language for complex emotions.
- Stress may surface later as anxiety or depression.
- Counseling helps normalize mixed feelings (love, resentment, fear, guilt.)
- It prepares siblings for future changes, including puberty.
- It offers a neutral space that is not the family system.
- It helps address common behaviors, like perfectionism and avoidance



Preparing for Future Challenges

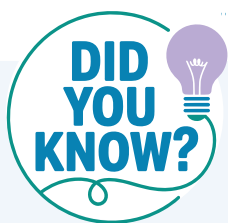
If the autistic sibling has not yet gone through puberty, siblings may be unprepared for:

- Increased strength
- Hormonal changes affecting behavior
- New safety concerns



Counseling Can Help Prepare Your Child

Counseling and honest conversations can help reduce shock and fear as children age, as well as provide coping strategies, and reinforce that adults are invested in their safety and well being. Finding a counselor who has experience with autism is recommended.



There are low-cost and community-based supports that may be available.

- **School supports:** counselors, social workers, psychologists, and emotional supports through 504 plans or IEPs
- **Community mental health resources:** family service agencies, university clinics, and autism or family support organizations
- **Peer connection:** sibling support groups, camps, and recreation programs
- **Faith and community centers:** free counseling, youth groups, or mentoring
- **Access tools:** virtual counseling services and insurance help lines