

# Isolation and Missed Childhood Experiences



Siblings of individuals with autism may experience isolation and miss out on typical childhood experiences due to unique safety issues, behavioral struggles, and complex challenges that may limit typical childhood experiences, and social opportunities.

## Some families cannot safely:

- Go to movies or restaurants
- Travel
- Attend large gatherings
- Stay out late or spontaneously change plans

## Siblings may miss:

- Birthday parties
- Sleepovers
- Extracurriculars
- Inviting friends home

## Due to triggers, siblings may have to avoid:

- Openly crying or laughing
- Playing music out loud
- Playing instruments
- TV shows or movies
- Sounds, words, or movements
- Playing freely or loudly



*This loss is real and needs to be acknowledged.*

## Making typical experiences possible:

While not everything is possible, some things can be with creativity and support:

**Sleepovers:** Host sleepovers when the autistic sibling is with another caregiver. You can also try to arrange sleepovers at their friends' homes, or host a sleepovers at a relative's home.

**One-on-one outings:** Schedule regular solo time with siblings, and plan special trips just with them. Even short, routine outings matter.

**Plan ahead:** Save money for future class trips, and look into sports with travel opportunities. Check out summer camps, community activities, faith-based activities, or clubs with travel or "night out" opportunities.



### Build a Safety Circle

Build a small circle of trusted, understanding adults, and accept help, even when it's hard.