

Aggression and Unpredictable Behavior



Some autistic individuals experience periods of physical aggression, especially during sensory overload, frustration, or communication breakdowns. Even when aggression is not intentional, siblings may be at risk.

Potential risks include:

- Hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling
- Throwing objects
- Scratching, pinching, pushing down
- Property destruction
- Intensified aggression/strength during puberty
- Psychological distress or trauma

Caregiver strategies:

Keep lines of communication open with siblings and create a clear plan ahead of time to reduce fear and risk.



A simple, age-appropriate plan might include:

- Having them leave the area immediately
- Assigning a designated safe space
- Setting a rule to not intervene or engage their sibling
- Getting an adult or calling for help if needed

Be sure to practice this plan calmly, not during crises.

Assigning a safe place:

Families can plan ahead by assigning a safe place where siblings can go if they need distance or feel overwhelmed.

This safe place might be:

- A bedroom or personal space
- A quiet area in the home
- A trusted neighbor's or relative's home
- An outdoor space such as a backyard or nearby area that provides calm and physical separation

