



# The Sibling Experience

## Recognizing the Risks, Resilience, and Support Needs

Siblings of individuals with autism often play a significant and complex role within the family system. Understanding both the challenges and strengths of siblings is essential for creating informed, family-centered support systems that recognize their experiences, protect their well-being, and foster long-term resilience.

### Emotional Health

Siblings of individuals with autism show higher levels of anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms compared to siblings of typically developing children. These effects are most pronounced during adolescence and periods of increased family stress (Orsmond & Seltzer, 2009; Hastings, 2003).



### Social Impact



Siblings of individuals with autism may experience reduced social opportunities, such as hosting sleepovers, inviting friends over, or having both parents present at social or sporting events. They may also feel misunderstood by peers. Additionally, unique family routines or living arrangements can lead to feelings of embarrassment or discomfort when explaining their home life or answering questions from others.

### Resilience

Many siblings report enhanced empathy, maturity, compassion, and social awareness. Despite challenges, siblings often describe personal growth and resilience resulting from their experiences (Stoneman, 2005; Cheng & Ye, 2020).



### References

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