



## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

### Brothers and Sisters of Children with Autism

Families living with autism spectrum disorder often look for tips on how to handle the many different challenges that may arise. "Real Life Tips for Kids with Autism" is a series of practical videos and resources presented by the experts at Children's Specialized Hospital.

In a family with a child who has autism, it is important not to forget the sibling, the typically developing child, and to make them feel as important as the child with autism.

It could be possibly more challenging than a typical family because of the reasons that a child with autism would require potentially a lot of services and have a lot of appointments and they could have emotions that should be addressed in relation to regarding their sibling who has autism.

The family and parents are typically busy with their schedules and all, but still in all that it's very important that the parent will carve out time specifically for the typically developing child. So for example, you could take the typical developing child to the convenience store to pick up an item or two, to allow them during that short time frame, maybe for about fifteen minutes, to allow them the opportunity to express their emotions, to talk about the way that they feel, to give them the opportunity for some things to come to surface with their emotions during that period of time. You'd be amazed at what things can be revealed in that short length of time, taking that extra time in the day, in your daily routine to talk to the child.

Being open with the child and not criticizing how they feel, letting them know that it's okay to feel the way that they feel however, whatever their emotions are, that is okay.

When a sibling presents with anger regarding their sibling who has autism, they need avenues to express their anger and parents can help in this way by having them to connect with a support group, maybe a sibling support group. There are a few sibling support groups around or maybe they might benefit from counseling, or there's other avenues for expressing their anger. It could be sports maybe or music or art. Their sibling with autism share the same feelings and emotions and they can learn to interact with one another and play with one another with these differences.

Oftentimes parents will place the child, the typical developing child, in the position where they may feel that they have to take the responsibility for the child with autism. The parent should remember that the child, the typical developing child, is not the caregiver, they are a child, and the parent should be taking on the caregiver role and the sibling could be taught to help with some tasks with that child with autism.

As the siblings get older, they may feel that they are able to take on more responsibility and may want to take more ownership of some of the time with their sibling with autism and that would be okay because that would seem age appropriate for them at that time.

Families need to know that they're not alone and that there's many resources out there available for them to give them the support that they need. There's different websites that they can go to, their local hospitals, for those that are near any children's hospitals, they can look into sources there.

Have hope and be encouraged and to remember to not forget about the child, the typical developing child, because you don't want for them to feel that they are not special, as special as your child with autism.



Through a partnership with Kohl's Cares, Children's Specialized Hospital is improving access to care for children with special health care needs.



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