

## LIFE CYCLE CHANGES FOR FAMILIES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Life-cycle stage	Parent	Siblings
<p>Early Childhood (ages 0-5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obtaining an accurate diagnosis</li> <li>● Informing siblings and relatives</li> <li>● Locating services</li> <li>● Seeking to find meaning in the exceptionally</li> <li>● Clarifying a personal ideology to guide decisions</li> <li>● Addressing issues of stigma</li> <li>● Identifying positive contributions of exceptionality</li> <li>● Setting great expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Less parental time and energy for sibling needs</li> <li>● Feelings of jealousy over less attention</li> <li>● Pears associated with misunderstandings of exceptionality</li> </ul>
<p>School Age (ages 6-12)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establishing routines to carry out family functions</li> <li>● Adjusting emotionally to educational implications</li> <li>● Clarifying issues of mainstreaming vs. special class placement</li> <li>● Participating in IEP conferences</li> <li>● Locating community resources</li> <li>● Arranging for extracurricular activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Division of responsibility for any physical care needs</li> <li>● Oldest female sibling may be at risk</li> <li>● Limited family resources for recreation and leisure</li> <li>● Informing friends and teachers</li> <li>● Possible concern over younger sibling surpassing older</li> <li>● Issues of "mainstreaming" into same school</li> <li>● Need for basic information on exceptionality</li> </ul>

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Adolescence  
(ages 12-21)

- Adjusting emotionally to possible chronicity of exceptionality
- Identifying issues of emerging sexuality
- Addressing possible peer isolation and rejection
- Planning for career/vocational development
- Arranging for leisure time activities
- Dealing with physical and emotional change of puberty
- Planning for postsecondary education
- Over identification with sibling
- Greater understanding of differences in people
- Influence of exceptionality on career choice
- Dealing with possible stigma and embarrassment
- Participation in sibling training programs
- Opportunity for sibling support group!

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Adulthood  
(ages 21- )

- Planning for possible need for guardianship
- Addressing the need for appropriate adult residence
- Adjusting emotionally to any adult implications of dependency
- Addressing the need for socialization opportunities outside the family
- Initiating career choice or vocational program
- Possible issues of responsibility for financial support
- Addressing concerns regarding genetic implications
- Introducing new in-laws to exceptionality
- Need for information on career/living options
- Clarify role of sibling advocacy
- Possible issues of guardianship

Issues encountered by parents and siblings of individuals with disabilities at life-cycle stages. (From Brothers & Sisters: A Special Part of Exceptional Families. Second Edition, Paul H. Brooks, Baltimore, Md. 1993, pages 40-41. Originally taken from Families, Professionals, and Exceptionally: A special partnership by Ann P. Turnbull and H. Rutherford Tumbull, III.)