



Early Intervention Clearinghouse

<http://eiclearinghouse.org>

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Siblings as Role Models for Children With Disabilities

The sibling relationship is often the longest lasting family connection. Children growing up together in a home spend a significant amount of time with each other. This shared time builds a special relationship and connections that last a lifetime. When a child has a developmental delay or disability, the sibling relationship can have an even greater impact because connections with other children may be more difficult. Children in early intervention can learn a lot from their siblings throughout the day in a variety of situations, such as meal time and play time. For their brothers and sisters with disabilities, siblings may fulfill many roles: friend, teacher, role model, and supporter. A big brother or sister might love helping their sibling in EI. Still, at times they may feel jealous and say “it’s not fair!” that the child receiving EI services is getting special attention.

Please see **SIBLINGS**, Page 4

DEC Recommended Practices Help Guide Your EI Services

The Division for Early Childhood’s (DEC) Recommended Practices provide interventionists and families with information about the practices most likely to improve learning and facilitate the development of children birth to 5 years old. These practices are informed by research and experience.

How can you use these practices?

- To support your own children.
- To evaluate whether your EI team is using these practices.

Below are the 7 of the 10 family practices as well as examples of how you can implement these practices.

For a complete version of the DEC Recommended Practices, visit <http://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices> For more support to use these practices, visit <http://ectacenter.org/decrp/type-pgfamily.asp>

Practice	How you can support your children	How well is your EI team using these practices? Ask ...
Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your team understand important family traditions • Tell your team how you prefer to receive information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your EI team address what is important for your family? • Is your EI team respectful of your wishes?
Practitioners provide the family with up-to-date, comprehensive and unbiased information in a way that the family can understand and use to make informed choices and decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Early Intervention Clearinghouse to access information • Talk to other parents to identify needed information sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your EI team share resources with you? • Does your EI team provide you with the information you need?
Practitioners are responsive to the family’s concerns, priorities, and changing life circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your child’s and family’s strengths and needs with your EI team members • Identify your main concerns in relation to your child and family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your EI team listen to your concerns? • Is your EI team responsive to changing life circumstances?
Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family’s priorities and concerns and the child’s strengths and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with your team to develop goals that are important to you • Help your EI team understand your family’s everyday routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your EI team help you determine individualized goals? • Does your EI team offer strategies to reach your goals?
Practitioners support family functioning, promote family confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select strategies that reinforce your interactions with your child • Share accomplishments with your team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your team highlight what you do well with your child? • Does your EI team build on family strengths?
Practitioners engage the family in opportunities that support and strengthen parenting knowledge and skills and parenting competence and confidence in ways that are flexible, individualized, and tailored to the family’s preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify skills and knowledge that you would like to work on • Ask the team how they can help you develop these skills and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your EI team offer strategies to help you develop skills and knowledge? • Is the information you receive individualized to your needs?
Practitioners provide the family of a young child who has or is at risk for developmental delay/disability, and who is a dual language learner, with information about the benefits of learning in multiple languages for the child’s growth and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your child to learn your native language • Learn the benefits of continuing to use your native language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your EI team offer information about the benefits of multiple languages? • Does your EI team encourage and celebrate the languages spoken in your home?

Involving Siblings in Early Intervention

The early intervention program is all about families! Siblings are important members of a child's family and can contribute significantly to your child's success in early intervention. By including siblings in your child's everyday routines and EI visits, you are reinforcing positive relationships that will encourage lifelong supports not only for your children but your whole family.



Here's How My Older Siblings Can Be Involved.

- Give me a hint to find the right puzzle piece.
- Practice taking turns in a pretend tea party.
- Roll a ball back and forth with me.
- Help me practice introducing myself to new friends.
- Show me how to climb and jump.
- Draw a picture that I can color.

Here's How My Younger Siblings Can Be Involved.

- Knock blocks down after I build a tower.
- Play peek-a-boo with me.
- Wave bye-bye or copy words that I say.
- Ride in the stroller while I push you.
- Watch me while I sing and dance.
- Laugh at my silly faces.



Some Siblings Feel Jealous or Left Out When Another Child Receives EI Services.

- Create a "Sibling Treasure Box" to help siblings know that EI sessions can also be fun for them. (A treasure box can include stickers, activity books, puzzles, or age-appropriate items that are special and fun.)
- Try to find a balance in spending time with siblings together and apart. Parents and caregivers should plan ahead to ensure each child has times to play and connect with parents alone and as a group.
- Ask your EI Team members for other ways to include the whole family in early intervention.

 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.



Resources for EI Families With Siblings

Books

Siblings: The Autism Spectrum Through Our Eyes

Jane Johnson
and Anne Van Rensselaer, Eds.
Jessica Kingsley, 2010
WM 203.5 .J66sib 2010

Chloe, Instead

Micah Player
Chronicle Books, 2012
Only available as an **eBook**



Just One of the Kids: Raising a Resilient Family When One of Your Children Has a Physical Disability

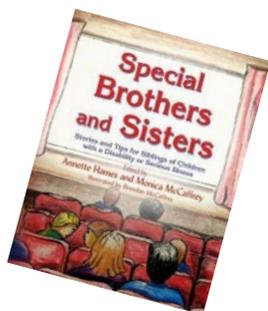
Kay Harris Kriegsman and Sara Palmer
Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013
HQ 773.6 .K75 2013

The Sibling Slam Book: What It's Really Like to Have a Brother or Sister With Special Needs

Donald Meyer, Ed.
Woodbine, 2005
HQ 773.6 .M612sib 2005

Special Brothers and Sisters

Annette Hames and Monica McCaffrey
Jessica Kingsley, 2005
HQ 773 .S64 2005



Siblings and Autism: Stories Spanning Generations and Cultures

Debra Cumberland and Bruce Mills
Jessica Kingsley, 2011. WM 203.5 .C969s 2011

Autism in My Family: A Journal for Siblings of Children With ASD

Sandra Tucker
Jessica Kingsley, 2017
WM 203.5 .T795 2017
Also available as an **eBook**

My Brother Is Special: A Cerebral Palsy Story

Murray Stenton
Loving Healing Press, 2017
PZ 7.1 .St428 2017

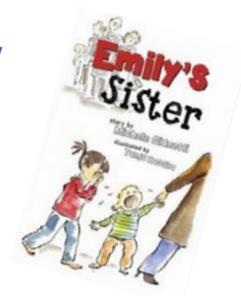


Tell Me the Number Before Infinity: The Story of a Girl With a Quirky Mind, an Eccentric Family, and Oh Yes, a Disability

Becky Taylor and Dena Taylor
Many Names Press, 2016
HQ 759.913 .T2121 2016

Emily's Sister: A Family's Journey With Dyspraxia and Sensory Processing Disorder

Michelle Gianetti
Your Stories Matter, 2017
PZ 7.1 .G3482 2017



Videos

Siblings of Autism: The Challenge and the Hope

30 minutes, DVD
Listen 2 Kids, 2013
HQ 773.8 .S53sib 2013

Understanding Brothers and Sisters on the Autism Spectrum

94 minutes, DVD
Coulter Video, 2007
WM 203.5 .U55c 2007

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SIBLINGS

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The Importance of Sibling Involvement

Families and their EI teams can plan ways to help siblings play and grow together. By involving siblings in the goals of individualized family support plans (IFSPs), all children—including the child with a disability—may benefit. For example, siblings can participate in speech therapy sessions. When siblings act as communication partners, they can help improve their brother or sister's communication while developing a stronger sibling bond.

Siblings can also be involved in playtime with their brother or sisters with a delay or disability. Siblings can be great role models for age-appropriate behavior. Sometimes, siblings without disabilities may need extra coaching to help them play and interact with their sibling receiving EI because she may not respond in the way the sibling expects of a playmate.

Careful planning and targeted strategies can help make sibling interactions positive and fun. Consider a child in EI



who is receiving supports for a physical disability. Throwing a ball back and forth may be difficult for this sibling pair, but an adult can coach the children to try rolling it back and forth. Or, consider a child in EI who is challenged in interpreting social cues such as body language. When a sibling holds a toy out to share, the sibling may not see this is an invitation to play. A parent may coach the sibling to include the words, "Share this dolly with me!" along with the gesture.

Ways to Involve Siblings

First, find the best times for sibling involvement. Mealtime or playtime can be a good place to start. Begin by teaching siblings some ways they can engage with their brother and sister with a disability.

Then you can show them how to help build new skills with their brother or sister by initiating conversations, inviting the brother or sister to play with them, requesting the brother or sister to share, and doing activities where they take turns. Also, siblings can give meaningful praise ("Meghan, I liked the way you shared your toy with me") or physical guidance ("Vaden, let me show you the new cars we can play with").

This praise and modeling behavior can help a child in EI experience greater success and reinforce a positive sibling relationship. At times, siblings trying to help may be discouraged or struggle with connecting to their sibling with a delay or disability. When the strategies aren't working, be a coach and encourage a sibling to try a different way or seek assistance from your EI team to try a new approach.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Second Quarter Update

Phase III, Year 2 continues to move forward as more people get involved in the SSIP activities in their area. Local leadership teams (LTs) in the three pilot areas (Aurora, Williamson County, and East St. Louis) continue to offer professional development and focused conversations around the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process.

The messaging workgroup has completed its work on a referral brochure for primary referral sources. In addition, the EI Clearinghouse has posted a checklist for reviewing EI public awareness materials on its website at <http://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/public-awareness/>

For a more details on the SSIP, visit <http://eiclearinghouse.org/public-awareness/issip/>

We welcome everyone's input, so if you have any comments, please e-mail them to cguillen@illinois.edu.

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Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse

Early Childhood & Parenting Collaborative
College of Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Phone: 877-275-3227 (in Illinois)

Principal investigator: Meghan Burke
Contributors: Sarah Isaacs, Rebecca Swartz, Jill Tompkins, Chung eun Lee, & Meghan Burke

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