



## Children who have Siblings with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Living with autism affects not only the diagnosed individual but that person's entire family. Parents are so involved in providing for the needs of the child with autism that the other children are often overlooked. Consequently, studies suggest that these siblings are at greater risk to have behavioral issues, lower grades in school, and anxiety or depression disorders. They also exhibit feeling of neglect, jealousy, and/or worry. It is important for parents to take measures to help these children as they cope with life as a sibling of a child with autism. Here are some things that can be done to effectively provide for their needs:

**Stay positive-** If the parent relate to the child with autism in a positive manner, the other children are more likely to adopt this behavior as well.

**Schedule one-on-one time with the other children-** All children thrive on times when the focus of their parent's attention is on them. Even though parents are often pressed for any extra time and energy because the child with special needs require so much from them, it is imperative for their siblings have a couple of minutes a day.

**Make the sibling's activities a matter of importance-** Parents are limited when it comes to being able to leave home due to caring for their child with autism. It is important to not allow for these limitations to interfere with activities your other child would like for you to attend. If he or she has a play, for example, it is crucial that a parent attends.

**Get them to speak to a counselor-** If you see any indications of stress or problems seek out a counselor in your area. The children would benefit from being able to express their feelings in a neutral setting thus lessening feelings of being a burden to an already stressed parent. Therapy will also provide useful tool to handle their feelings in a positive manner.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 337-436-9533 or 1-888-414-FYCA.

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220 Louie Street Lake Charles, LA 70601 Phone 337/436-9533 Fax: 337/439-9941 [www.fyca.org](http://www.fyca.org)

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