

Siblings of Children with Special Needs: A Book List

Breebaart, P. & Breebaart, J. (1993). *When I Die Will I Get Better?* New York: Peter Bedrick Books.

This book deals with the death of a sibling using the story of two brothers, Joe and Fred Rabbit.

Collins, P. (1990). *Waiting for Baby Joe*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company.

Realistic text and photographs chronicle the effect of Baby Joe's premature birth on young Missy and her family by disrupting family routines and causing Missy to feel confused and left out.

Duncan, D. (1994). *When Molly was in the Hospital: a Book for Brothers and Sisters of Hospitalized Children*. Windsor, CA: Rayve Productions.

This beautifully illustrated storybook centers on a young girl whose sisters becomes ill and is hospitalized for surgery. It's an honest portrayal of the child's feelings and the family's experience throughout the events of the sibling's illness, hospitalization, and recovery. Recommended for ages five to ten.

Feiges, L. & Weiss, M. (2004). *Sibling Stories: Reflections on Life with a Brother or Sister on the Autism Spectrum*. Shawnee, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Sibling relationships involving a brother or sister with an autism spectrum disorder can present enormous emotional challenges for everyone involved. This collection of deeply moving first-person excerpts from interviews with 20 siblings offers in-depth coverage of the issues of paramount concern to typical siblings like establishing boundaries and resentment.

Gallagher, P., Powell, T. & Rhodes, C. (2006). *Brothers & Sisters: A Special Part of Exceptional Families*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Company.

There is something special about growing up in a family with a brother or sister with special needs. In addition, this book provides a focus on other family members besides parents, including grandparents and other extended family members who interact with siblings in the relationships within the family.

Hale, N. & Sternberg, K. (2004). *Oh Brother!: Growing Up With a Special Needs Sibling*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.

Living with a sibling who has special needs can be difficult for a child to deal with, day after day. This book provides anecdotal examples, self-help guidelines and practical coping techniques to promote positive, realistic attitudes as well as the benefits of having a special needs sibling.

Hames, A. & McCaffrey, M. (2004). *Special Brothers and Sisters: Stories and Tips for Siblings of Children with a Disability or Serious Illness*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

"Special Brothers and Sisters" is a collection of real-life accounts from the brothers and sisters of children with special needs, disability or serious illness, ranging in age from 3 to 18 years. They explain, in their own words, what it's like to live with their siblings. These stories, from 40 different families, come with related tips to help siblings deal with some of the things that happen in their family lives.

Heyman, C. (2003). *My Extra Special Brother*. Georgia: Fragile X Association.

Sixteen-year-old Carly Heyman writes an endearing story of growing up with her big brother Scott, a young man who has a sweet smile, a courageous heart, and fragile X syndrome--the world's leading cause of inherited mental impairment.

Jansen, L. (1998). *My Sister Is Special*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company.

A little boy learns compassion and patience as he cares for his "special" little sister, who has Down's Syndrome.

Lewis, B. (2007). *In Jesse's Shoes: Appreciating Kids with Special Needs*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publications.

In this sensitive yet realistic story, Jesse's sister struggles to understand her brother--and the kids who make fun of him. This endearing book will encourage families everywhere to appreciate and befriend children with special needs.

McHugh, M. (2002). *Special Siblings: Growing Up With Someone with a Disability*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Company.

McHugh describes her life with her mentally retarded brother. She explores the spectrum of feelings from anger and guilt to love and pride. She identifies issues siblings encounter in childhood through adulthood and offers advice on coping with feelings, understanding family dynamics and planning for long-term care.

Meyer, D. (2005). *The Sibling Slam Book: What It's Really Like to Have a Brother or Sister with Special Needs*. Baltimore: Woodbine House.

80 junior and senior high school students provide honest and revealing answers to a set of 50 questions about having a brother or sister with special needs. Their unedited responses present a range of points of view and emotions that offer other siblings the chance to know their peers and feel a part of a broader community.

Meyer, D. (2009). *Thicker Than Water: Essays by Adult Siblings of People with Disabilities*. Baltimore: Woodbine House.

Bound by blood, but not always by love, a sibling can be your friend or rival, defender or detractor--sometimes simultaneously! But what's the impact on that bond when one sibling has a disability? In this thought-provoking essay collection, thirty-nine adult siblings reflect on how their lives have been indelibly shaped by their relationship with a brother or sister with special needs.

Meyer, D. (1997). *Views From Our Shoes: Growing Up With a Brother or Sister With Special Needs*. Baltimore: Woodbine House.

A collection of essays by children with siblings who have special needs from ages 4 to 18. This book covers a variety of disabilities, but it deals with many issues that are universal when one child in the house is sick.

Meyer, D. & Vadasy, P. (1996). *Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs: A Book for Sibs*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

This book focuses on the intensity of emotions that brothers and sisters experience when they have a sibling with special needs, and the hard questions they ask. Written for young readers, the book offers suggestions on how to make life easier for everyone in the family.

Peterkin, A. (1992). *What About Me?: When Brothers and Sisters Get Sick*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.

Laura experiences conflicting emotions when her brother becomes seriously ill. Includes suggestions for parents to help their well children cope with a chronically ill sibling.

Safer, J. (2003). *The Normal One: Life With a Difficult or Damaged Sibling*. New York: Bantam Dell

Drawing on more than sixty interviews with normal, or intact, siblings, Safer explores the daunting challenges they face, and probes the complex feelings that can strain families and damage lives. A "normal" sibling herself, Safer chronicles her own life-shaping experiences with her troubled brother.

Stuve-Bodeen, S. (2005). *The Best Worst Brother*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

A sequel to the popular storybook "We'll Paint the Octopus Red," this endearing picture book looks at how a relationship evolves between an older sister and her younger brother with Down Syndrome.

Strom, Kate. (2005). *Being the Other One: Growing Up With a Brother or Sister Who Has Special Needs*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

When there is a disabled child in the family, how are normally developing siblings affected? Able siblings commonly struggle with feelings of isolation, grief, anger and anxiety and other emotional issues that can have lifelong effects. The author describes growing up with a sister who has cerebral palsy.

Thompson, M. (1992). *My Brother Matthew*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

An uplifting book about a boy whose little brother is born with special needs. The baby is in the ICU at the hospital, comes home, and needs therapies and a lot of his parents' attention.