

Supporting Siblings During COVID-19

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<https://bit.ly/SeaverWebinar7>



Agenda

- Introductions
 - Michelle Gorenstein, PsyD
 - Danielle Halpern, PsyD
 - Sophia Sermone
- Why Focus on Siblings?
- Strategies to Support Siblings
- A Siblings Perspective
- Question and Answer



Why Focus on Siblings?

- Family dynamics have changed over the past 3 months
- Siblings of children with a disability have needs too
- Research has shown that when a typically developing child helps with the education of his or her sibling with a disability, it benefits both individuals
- On the other hand, over parentifying a typically developing child can lead to problems



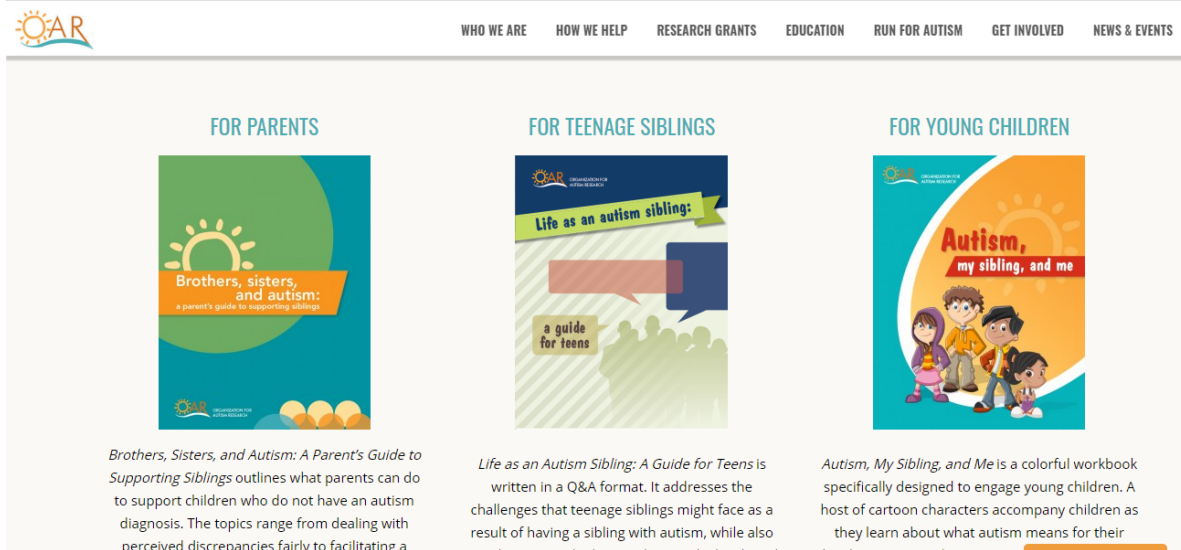
Parenting Strategies

- **Validate your child's experiences and feelings**
- **Carve out special one on one time with each child**
- **Allow your child private “safe” space when needed**
- **Set equal expectations of all children as best you can, with regards to chores and behavior.**
- **Engage in shared activities as a family**
- **Provide direct and specific positive praise**
- **Don't pathologize normal sibling rivalry**

Sibling Strategies

- **Connect with other siblings of children with disabilities**
- **Practice self care**
 - Engage in activities you enjoy daily
 - Maintain social connections
 - Practice gratitude

General Resources



The screenshot shows the Autism Speaks website with a navigation bar at the top containing links: WHO WE ARE, HOW WE HELP, RESEARCH GRANTS, EDUCATION, RUN FOR AUTISM, GET INVOLVED, and NEWS & EVENTS. Below the navigation bar, there are three main resource categories:

- FOR PARENTS**: Features a book cover titled "Brothers, sisters, and autism: a parent's guide to supporting siblings". Below the cover, the text reads: "Brothers, Sisters, and Autism: A Parent's Guide to Supporting Siblings outlines what parents can do to support children who do not have an autism diagnosis. The topics range from dealing with perceived discrepancies fairly to facilitating a..."
- FOR TEENAGE SIBLINGS**: Features a book cover titled "Life as an autism sibling: a guide for teens". Below the cover, the text reads: "Life as an Autism Sibling: A Guide for Teens is written in a Q&A format. It addresses the challenges that teenage siblings might face as a result of having a sibling with autism, while also..."
- FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**: Features a book cover titled "Autism, my sibling, and me". Below the cover, the text reads: "Autism, My Sibling, and Me is a colorful workbook specifically designed to engage young children. A host of cartoon characters accompany children as they learn about what autism means for their..."



<https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Siblings%20Guide%20to%20Autism.pdf>

<https://researchautism.org/how-we-help/families/sibling-support/>



Remote Sibshop Activity Ideas

The following is a list of activities and ideas to support siblings remotely. The list was generated during a March 23rd Zoom call with 71 Sibshop Facilitators from across the United States, and from other countries around the world. We expect this list to grow! If you facilitate a registered Sibshop and would like to add your ideas to this list, please send them to info@siblingsupport.org.

Zoom/Google Hangouts/Virtual Meeting Ideas

Virtual Sibshop – South Sound Parent to Parent (WA)

Two Zoom sessions, one for sibs 7-12, another for sibs 13-18, will include art activities, games and discussion activities about how sibs are coping in the current environment. Outreach to parents to gauge interest/availability via email.

Virtual Sibshop on Google Hangouts – Sandy Feet Initiative (CA)

Beginning with a "shout out" to acknowledge participants, the first virtual meeting of Sandy Feet replaced their usual outings on the beach and in the ocean. Discussion activities focused on how sibs are coping, followed by a reading of "What About Me" by Brennan and Mandy Farmer (see Sibshops Book List for other book ideas). Future sessions will include a joke of the day, facilitator guided art project, guided meditation, and "show up in your suits" to replicate the usual beach experience!

Family Picture Day. Sandy Feet is also entertaining the idea of using a Google Hangout to invite sibs to hold up a picture of them and their family, and then tell the story of when the photo was taken. Maybe they could also draw a picture of them and their family, and talk about it?

Cooking Activities. Suggested by several members, can be as simple as trail mix or something in the oven. Choose a recipe and have your Sibshoppers make it at home, then share as a group the results of your labor!

Virtual Creativity! – Family Support Network of Greater Forsyth (NC):

Search

Search Site

Search

[Advanced Search](#)

Join Us At One of Our Workshops or Training Events

The only way to become a first-generation Sibshop facilitator is to attend a [two-day Sibshop training](#).

Even if you don't want to become a Sibshop facilitator, you can join us for the first day for a lively and rewarding discussion of sibs' issues across the lifespan.

Please know: Registration costs are determined by the agencies hosting the workshops and trainings. For information and to register, please contact these agencies directly.

<https://www.siblingsupport.org/COVID-19-Resources/remote-sibshop-activity-ideas>



BREAKTHROUGH

INTENSIVE PHYSICAL THERAPY

VIRTUAL SIBSHOPS

Weekly virtual workshops for all sibs of children with special needs!

Every week they will get the opportunity to:

- ★ Practice guided meditation and gratitude exercises to help carry them through some really stressful times and maintain positivity
- ★ Discussion activities to open up the floor for them to talk, vent, or just talk about some positive things to focus on
- ★ Fun activities to bond and connect the sibs!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

-CALL: 631-348-0959
-EMAIL: INFO@BREAKTHROUGHTPTLI.COM
-VISIT: BREAKTHROUGHTPTLI.COM/SIBSHOP/

*Where: The comfort of
your home!
When: Every Friday 12-
1pm*

**Free 30 minute
exercise every
week for the
sibs!**



BREAKTHROUGH
INTENSIVE PHYSICAL THERAPY

VIRTUAL *FREE* SIB EXERCISE SESSIONS

**For the Siblings of all Special
Needs Kids (no age limits)**

This is a great way for them to:

- ★ Interact in a fun safe environment!**
- ★ Get some of their energy out!**
- ★ Get them moving and into something
that feels like a routine**
- ★ Give YOU as a parent
a MUCH needed break!**

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-VISIT: BREAKTHROUGHTPTLI.COM

**Every Wednesday @
10:15-10:45am!
Contact us for the link
to join**



A Sibling's Voice: Sophia Sermone



ADNP Kids Research Foundation / www.adnpfoundation.org.

Questions & Answers

- Thank you for your attention and participation!
- Please write questions into chat feature and let us know of additional topics you would like covered
- For copies of slides, please email:
audrey.rouhandeh@mssm.edu or bari.britvan@mssm.edu