



OAR Launches “Autism Sibling Support” Initiative with Three New Resources

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ARLINGTON, VA – The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is expanding its collection of informational materials and shining the spotlight on an important but often overlooked demographic: brothers and sisters of individuals with autism. To kick off its “Autism Sibling Support” initiative, OAR is releasing a set of [three new resources](#) that are now available online for free download and printing: one for parents, another for teenage siblings, and a third for young siblings.

While some organizations have contributed significantly to the task of supporting brothers and sisters of individuals with autism, OAR recognizes that these future advocates, potential caretakers, and lifelong friends need more. Siblings of children with autism play a unique role in their brother or sister’s life – they serve as teachers, friends, and even caretakers when parents are no longer able to be. As a result, many are faced with overwhelming challenges, responsibilities, and emotions before they’re able to develop coping strategies that parents use.

The “Autism Sibling Support” resources not only validate siblings’ feelings and provide a sense of comfort in knowing that they’re not alone, but offer practical and age-appropriate guidance on how to address some of the difficulties they’re likely to experience. These resources can be effective when used independently or as a supplement to a more comprehensive support plan/program.

Brothers, Sisters, and Autism: A Parent’s Guide addresses a range of topics that parents may have questions about, such as explaining autism to children, helping siblings deal with tough feelings, and facilitating a positive relationship between siblings. This easy-to-use document includes a clickable directory, so parents don’t have to scroll through all of the information to find a section that’s especially relevant to what their family is currently going through.

Life as an Autism Sibling: A Teen’s Guide (ages 11-18) is a handbook for teenage and even pre-teen siblings, offering guidance on how to productively address the challenges that can arise from having a brother or sister with autism. The resource covers several key concerns; this includes explaining autism to friends and peers, and coping with a family dynamic that’s different from what friends may experience. It also features testimonials from other teenage and young adult siblings who have “been there, done that.”

Autism, My Sibling, and Me (ages 5-10) is a fun and engaging workbook for young children. A host of colorful cartoon characters accompany these siblings as they learn about what autism means for their brother or sister – and deal with potentially stressful issues. Through fun activities and supportive content, this resource also helps children work through any autism-related questions and concerns they may have.

All three resources are available at the [“Autism Sibling Support” initiative](#) page of OAR’s Web site as .pdf documents for easy viewing, downloading and printing. Please also note that hard copies of *Autism, My Sibling, and Me* will be available by September 15. If you’re interested in reserving an advance copy, please send an e-mail to programs@researchautism.org with “Sibling workbook” in the subject line.

If you have any questions, want to learn more about OAR's "Autism Sibling Support" Initiative, or have ideas about how to expand program offerings in this important area, please contact Ben Kaufman, director, programs and community outreach, at 703-243-9762 or bkaufman@researchautism.org.

About OAR: The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national non-profit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. OAR is dedicated to promoting research that can be applied to help families, educators, caregivers, and individuals with autism find much-needed answers to their immediate and urgent questions. Learn more at their Web site: www.researchautism.org.

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