

Sibling checklist

Some signs that a child is adjusting well to sharing life with a brother or sister with disability include:

- Understands their brother or sister's disability
- Knows how to answer questions about their brother or sister
- Talks openly about any difficulties and mixed feelings
- Doesn't take on too much responsibility
- Is not the 'good child' all the time
- Doesn't have too many signs of stress such as ongoing physical problems (like stomach or head-aches), sleep problems, anxiety or misbehaviour
- Spends time alone with parents from time to time
- Takes part in activities outside home such as sport or music
- Has friends – goes to friends' houses and has them to their own home
- Has contact with other adults, besides parents, who can provide support e.g. grandparents, family friends, teacher
- Enjoys school and progresses well
- Has contact with other siblings of children with disability

If the answer is 'yes' to most of the above, it is likely that the child is well supported and managing life as a sibling. 'No' answers provide opportunities to explore what a sibling might need. Of course, situations change over time and there may be periods when a sibling needs extra support. Transition times for them or their brother or sister can always bring up new stresses. But if they have felt listened to and understood they will likely be able to ask for the support they need during especially challenging times.