

ROAD WORK AHEAD:

Siblings are Special, too!

Presented by

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A sample of things we've been asked regarding WHY it's so hard as a family:

- Why do my typically developing children demand so much attention? Don't they know how much time it takes to care for the ONE with special needs?
- When the kids ask "Why do we have to take (xxx) with us, what am I to say?"
- Why do extended family seem so removed from us? We could really use their help!
- Why don't we get outside support from family and friends?
- When our typically developing kids ask, "Why don't you do things WE want to do?" how can I remedy that?
- Why can't we ask our kids (who are capable enough and old enough) to watch over the child with special needs?

Typically developing kids OFTEN don't get the same freedoms as their peers

- WE parents also DON'T get the same freedom as OUR PEERS!
- LIFE IS DIFFERENT AND WE MUST FIND A NEW NORMAL THAT WORKS FOR US!

Our children who are typically developing:

Frustrated – Feeling Alone - Neglected – Jealous – Embarrassed

“Will I ‘get’ what they have?”

“I might make up problems or have behavior issues to get *your* attention!”

“I can't tell you how I'm feeling or what I'm afraid of.”

“I'll work hard to help to ease your load.”

“What does the future hold? Can I know/learn about that?”

Why do my typically developing children demand so much attention? Don't they know how much time it takes to care for the ONE with special needs?

- It's not their job to be aware of it....it is your job.
- Be sure to treat each other kindly. EVERYONE has value. (I Cor. 10:24, Rom. 15:2, Phil. 2: 3-4)
- Talk nicely to each other: no name calling, no yelling...etc.
- Be fair – same rules
- Don't play favorites – compliments
- Family meetings – give explanations (reactions will change), share feelings, ask Q's, review calendar
- Family time ONE ON ONE
- Understand individuals strengths and weaknesses

When the kids ask “Why do we have to take 😊 with us, what am I to say?”

- They are a PART OF THE FAMILY
- Find ways to INCLUDE everyone whatever you are doing-in all aspects of life – but not everyone ALWAYS needs to go.
- Recognize the pecking order and seat kids carefully and thoughtfully....
- Discuss things....like the times when the special needs child BOTHERS, HARASSES, POKES, INTERRUPTS, and/or causes the whole family to not get the sleep they need
- How to assimilate all the children:
MAKE THEM FEEL SPECIAL
Keep your word
Take dates
- Allow grandparents to have each of the kids at DIFFERENT times.

Why do our children and extended family seem so removed from us? We could really use their help!

- ❑ Sometimes they fear they'll get "STUCK" helping.
- ❑ Accept help, but don't take advantage of it.
- ❑ They fear manipulation or expectations about caring for your child.
- ❑ **INCLUDE THEM in FUN THINGS!**
- ❑ Ask for help in the simple things for starters
- ❑ **START EARLY!**

Why don't we get outside support from family and friends?

- ❑ Often -they have no idea that you even need help - you make it look easy.
- ❑ INVOLVE them in FUN things, not just the work...
- ❑ Consider asking if anyone has “leads” on people to help care
- ❑ Consider contacting, a trusted agency, your church, your county for support....
- ❑ IF someone offers, keep their name on a list.
- ❑ REMEMBER...they must be trained!

When our typically developing kids ask, “Why don’t you do things WE want to do?” how can I remedy that?

- Find things all of you can do together...Movie, Game night – cards, board games, video games, visiting someone or having guests over, swimming, going to a sports game, read a book together
WHATEVER YOU CAN DO – each of us will have different limitations and different options.
- Be creative – think outside the box...Can you “create” things together: drawing/painting – JUST FOR FUN!
- Find care for the child with special needs and PLAN to do what the others can do: Travel? Camping? Skating? Biking?
- Let typical developing kids have own activities and interests.
- You might want to travel to some foreign country but will have to settle for dinner out at a restaurant that has the cuisine of where you’d like to travel.

Why can't we ask our kids (who are capable enough and old enough) to watch over the child with special needs? (You can, but be careful and sensitive)

- ❑ Everyone should have roles and responsibilities...
- ❑ They shouldn't be "on call" all the time.
- ❑ Show appreciation for their willingness to help. (CINDERELLA STORY)
- ❑ Verbally compliment them
- ❑ How to help the children by understanding age groups:
 - ❑ Under five: They'll notice differences but can't express themselves
 - ❑ Pre-teens: More aware and may worry more, be conflicted between guilt and embarrassment
 - ❑ Teens: They'll ask more detailed questions and share more detailed concerns. Social life may be a concern.
- ❑ LISTEN and AFFIRM them at all ages.
- ❑ Pay attention to changes in behavior, patterns, attitudes.

Typically developing children (if included and cared for, too) tend to become:

- ❑ MORE AWARE of others with special needs
- ❑ SERVERS – more aware of the needs of others
- ❑ COMPASSIONATE (to their sibling and to others in general)
- ❑ PATIENT – more flexible
- ❑ RESPONSIBLE –

Such great POSITIVE character traits are built at home that serve them well on the job, at school, and in the world!

Caring for one with special needs can be hard on the marriage and on the kids.....

- Be Patient
- HAVE HUMOR!
- Have fun
- Cry and laugh together
- Ask questions – see how everyone is doing, then meet the needs

We'd love to stay in touch so we can take this
UNEXPECTED JOURNEY together

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