

The siblings of children who have frequent or extended medical experiences need support too; they are an important part of the family support system. We believe in supporting the whole family; whether the sibling experiences the medical setting or is cared for at home, ensuring their developmental and psychosocial needs are met, sets them up for mastering their individual experience and can be a positive coping support for the hospitalized child and family.

Developmental Roadblocks for Teen Siblings

- Lack of trust
- Loss of peer interactions, peer acceptance
- Threat to future competence
- Enforce independence
- Social isolation
- Risk-taking behaviors increase
- Self identity confusion

How to Help

- Respect privacy
- Speak directly and honestly
- Encourage peer interactions
- Provide opportunities for self expression, validate feelings, and to ask questions
- Provide privacy and encourage a “safe” person other than the caregiver that siblings can go to for questions or to express concerns
- Address possible long-term issues
- Support siblings language of experience and how to talk to peers
- Discourage sibling taking on “adult roles” and allow for age-appropriate experiences