

# Family Members Must Accommodate for a Special Needs Child

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Most parents, who have children with special needs, struggle with how to respond to the other children in their family. Some parents overly accommodate for the special needs child and ignore the needs of their other children. Other parents reward the other siblings by indulging in their material needs because they do not have time for quality activities. Typically, when parents cannot find the time to care for all of their children, the other children may respond by:

- Acting out aggressively with anger and frustration
- Shutting down and hiding their emotions
- Becoming overly kind and not taking care of their own

personal needs

## Effective Strategies

How parents balance their lives to care for themselves, their special needs child, and their other children is critical for positive family interactions. Families can insure that their challenging interactions with their family members are healthy and rewarding by using the following strategies:

Maintaining healthy relations with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends can provide opportunities for social growth for all of the children in the family.

The family must accept that meeting the needs of each and all family members can be a struggle. They may need help, guidance, and training from a parent education program or counselor.

When all children participate in family problem-solving discussions, they learn how to adapt and solve their own daily challenges. Resolving challenges becomes a gift for all family members as they learn to care and respect each other's needs. All family and extended family members must agree to be consistent in how they respond to family conflicts, setting boundaries, and disciplining children.

Family members must understand the unique approaches for working with their special needs child. These needs may include written or pictorial instructions about a schedule for the day that identifies the

family members' responsibilities.

All siblings are part of the family dynamics and they may need to be taught how to respect the individual needs of each family member.

A check-in during the family's dinner provides opportunities to share daily successes and challenges.

Planned family meetings can include reviewing the weekly family calendar and coordinating family play dates, spiritual growth activities, and community service projects.

Much success in meeting diverse family needs!

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