



Adam's Story

These notes are to accompany the Sibs Talk Lite Primary School worksheets

My name is Adam. My brother is different. He is autistic. This means that he is different to other people's brothers. This can make things hard at home and when we are out and about. When we are playing games at home he can shout and get angry if he doesn't win. He can also break my toys sometimes. This makes me feel sad and scared. When we go shopping he can get angry and shout if he doesn't want to do something. This sometimes makes me feel sad and embarrassed. My brother can also be really funny and make me laugh. He loves watching TV and running. I love my brother but sometimes I don't like what he does.

It's not his fault that he is autistic. My brother is different.

1. Why is Adam's brother different?
2. What does he do?
3. How does this make Adam feel?
4. What might help Adam?
5. What would you do if you felt sad or scared?
6. What do you love about your brother or sister?
7. What can make you feel sad or worried?

8. What do you know about Autism?
9. What would you like to know about Autism?

Information about Autism (pre-reading)

Autism may also be called ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) or Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). You can't tell that someone has ASC just by looking at them. Autism lasts for all of a person's life but they can still do a lot of things and learn a lot of skills.

What is it like for siblings if their brother or sister has autism?

Siblings often have a really good relationship with their brother or sister with ASC. However, they may sometimes feel that everything is about putting their brother or sisters' needs first. It may be hard to go on days out or to do things that other families do. Even though siblings understand that their brother or sister need lots of extra attention and help sometimes, they can feel left out or jealous of the extra time which their parents spend with them. They may feel that they have to look after their brother or sister all the time.

What causes autism?

Nobody knows why people have ASC. People are born with it, though it may not be noticed while they are very young. You cannot catch it like a cold or flu.

What does it mean?

If someone has ASC, their brain works differently. They may not understand what is happening, or why. They sometimes find it hard to be around other people or they may react differently to what is going on around them.

People with ASC may be affected in five main ways.

They may find talking and listening much more difficult. They may find it hard to link words with their meanings and because of this they may find it difficult to understand what other people say. They may not be able to speak, or when they do speak, they find it hard to say what they mean. They may copy what people say, or only talk about their favourite subject and they may ask the same question lots of times. They may find it difficult to use their imagination. This may mean they can't join in 'make-believe' games. They may like doing the same things at the same times every

day and get very upset when these routines are broken. They may like to have things always in the same place. Your brother or sister may also have lots of things they are good at. They might be good at concentrating on one activity at a time or have interesting hobbies or topics they know lots about.

They may struggle to learn social skills. They may find making friends and getting on with people more difficult. They may find it difficult to join in with groups and to make new friends or find it hard to understand what other people are thinking or feeling. They often do not understand body language. They may not always realise that a smile means you are pleased, or a hug means you like them.

They may not understand how to behave, when to be quiet, when to wear clothes, what things are private. They find it very hard when there are lots of people around or lots of things happening at the same time.

Some people with autism are also affected through their senses. Their hearing may be very sensitive and they may not like loud noises. They may have a very strong sense of taste and be a bit limited in the food choices which they make. They may also dislike being touched or hugged. Some people with autism may also have epilepsy. Some people with autism may also have difficult behaviour.

What help is there?

There is no cure for autism but people who have it can have happy and enjoyable lives even if they need some extra help.

Managing feeling worried (pre-reading)

Everyone has worries at one time or another. Worrying is normal. However, sometimes it's hard to talk about it. A lot of worry can make it hard to enjoy life and it can affect school work. It is important to get help with worries.

Some things you can do if you feel worried

1. Talk to your parent about being worried. Parents prefer it when their children tell them what they are worried about.
2. If you can't talk to your parent, talk to someone at school – your teacher, a pastoral care person, or a school counsellor.
3. Write your worries in a diary – sometimes it helps to get them out of your head and down on paper.

Good things about family life (pre-reading)

There are lots of positive and enjoyable things about having a disabled brother or sister. Many siblings like you learn new skills, have fun with their brothers and sisters, and feel proud of their family. Read about the good stuff that siblings talk about.

Siblings often tell us about the things that are good about growing up with a disabled brother or sister. You may have met new friends, had fun family experiences together or have learnt how to do things at an earlier age.

Some ways to remind yourself of the good things about being a sibling

1. Make a list of all the things you have learnt to do as a sibling that other people your age don't know about.
2. Put some photos on your bedroom wall of the friends you have made through meeting other siblings.
3. Write down the things that your family have done together that you have enjoyed.

About Sibs

Sibs is the only UK charity representing the needs of siblings of disabled people. There are over half a million young siblings and at least 1.7 million adult siblings in the UK, who have grown up with a disabled brother or sister. Sibs aims to enhance the lives of siblings by providing them with information and support, and by influencing service provision throughout the UK.

Thank you for taking the time to support siblings of disabled children in your school.

Email info@sibs.org.uk

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Sibs relies on donations and grants to support siblings. If this information has helped you in your work, please consider donating at www.sibs.org.uk/donate