

# HOW CAN WE BETTER SUPPORT SIBLINGS?



**Sibling Involvement:** Acknowledge siblings when you enter a patient's room. Asking sibs if they have any questions helps them feel included and important in the process. Offer ways for them to help like getting supplies, decorating hall windows or reading stories for their sibling. Sibs should feel like a part of the process, not “in the way.”



**Sibling Saturday:** Arrange for a “Sib Saturday” where volunteers are on hand to entertain patients and siblings. Have special snacks and activities on hand—giving kids a time just for them. Encourage parents to have alone time out together with coupons and suggestions for nearby places.

**Family Friday:** Offer a movie night for families! Provide popcorn, snacks and drinks to help bring families together for a fun experience.

**Video Chat:** If a family has limited access to technology, arrange for patients and parents to use an iPad or computer to video chat. This keeps them connected to siblings who are staying with extended family or unable to visit the hospital.

**Teen Sibling Area:** Have a special area for teens with furniture their size and age appropriate décor and entertainment items (movies, books, games, etc.). Crayons and baby toys not allowed.

**Sibling Waiting Area:** A designated area for siblings gives them a place to belong. Young siblings can have books and toys and older kids can have computers and video games.



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**Sibling Wisdom Book:** Have a specific area for a “Sibling Wisdom Book” for siblings to share thoughts, feelings and suggestions for other siblings going through this experience as well. Encourage sharing messages of inspiration and hope. The book should be accessible at all times for kids to see.



**Sibling Badges:** Provide special sibling badges to have security give to each child visiting a brother or sister. This will require arrangements with security, but gives staff a chance to say hello and ask the sibling how they are doing.

**Siblings Seat on Kids Council:** For hospitals and organizations with a “Kids Council”, advocate for a spot for a young and teen sib to voice their opinions and represent their fellow sibs.

**National Sibling Day:** April 10th is National Sibling Day! Recognize this day in common spaces and encourage families to gather together.

**Sib Support Volunteers:** Create a special segment of Volunteer Training to highlight impact that hospitalizations and treatment have on siblings. Identify several volunteers whose main focus can be supporting siblings.

**Sibling Mail:** If your hospital or organization has a designated area where parents and patients can get mail, make sure that there is mail being created for siblings too. Have volunteers make cute cards for patients AND siblings!



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