

Laugh & Learn™

# Siblings

You're Stuck with  
Each Other,  
So Stick Together



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PUBLISHING®

James J. Crist, Ph.D., & Elizabeth Verdick

“A great choice for kids and grown-ups  
to talk and laugh about together.”

—*Booklist*

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by James J. Crist, Ph.D.,  
& Elizabeth Verdick

Illustrated by Steve Mark

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#### Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 338-2068  
[help4kids@freespirit.com](mailto:help4kids@freespirit.com)  
[www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com)



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# Dedication

To the young people who have shared their stories of their siblings with me and allowed me to help them, and hopefully to help other kids as well. To my siblings—I love all of you more than words can say.  
—JC

To Olivia and Zach, for everything you teach each other and everything you've taught me. And to my sisters, Suzanne and Erica, and my brother Mark, the best siblings ever.  
—EV

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# A Message for Y-O-U

Hey, you.  
You there.

Yeah, that's right,  
**You.**  
The one reading.



This book is about sisters, brothers, and getting along. Every sibling relationship has ups and downs, twists and turns, and moments of **AAAACK!** (Kind of like a roller coaster.) But you can smooth out the ride and have more fun. We wrote this book to help you do it.

It would be really cool if your siblings read the book, too, but that might not happen. Maybe they can't even read yet. Or maybe you'll put this book right where they can find it—*hint hint*—and it still won't get read. That's okay because we have a message especially for *you*.

You live in a family, and your family is your training ground for learning to get along with other people in life. Getting along is challenging no matter how awesome you or your family may be. You'll need practice and some patience, too.

Every idea in this book starts with you. That's because getting along with others really comes down to being the best **YOU** you can be. (Corny but true.) There are probably at least a *few* things you would like to change about your relationship with your siblings. Well, the one person you can change in this world is yourself. The new ways *you* decide to act and speak may inspire your sisters or brothers, or the rest of your family, to follow your lead.

So give yourself a pat on the back, or take a little bow—you deserve some credit for what you're about to do.



# Quick Quiz

A *sibling* is:

1. a kid who wears a lot of “bling”
2. that pest who bugs you day and night
3. a brother or sister
4. another word for “attention hog” (oink, oink)
5. someone who’s there for you in good times and bad times—maybe for a lifetime



**Answer:** 3 for sure, and 5 we hope.

But if your brother wears a lot of bling or your sister steals the spotlight every chance she gets, you might have answered 1 or 4 *and* 2, and you’d be right.

Whether your sibling is flashy, annoying, or just plain weird, he or she is part of your family. *Families are forever.* That means you’ve got a bond—and you’ve gotta bond. This book will show you how.



## Can You Relate?

Being siblings means you and your brother or sister share one parent or two. But families come in all shapes and sizes—they're never one-size-fits-all. Each family fits together in its own way, like a one-of-a-kind jigsaw puzzle. You might have . . .

### Siblings by birth

So, you and your sister or brother have the same mom and dad.

### Half-siblings

The term "half-sibling" means you and your sib\* share only one birth parent. You might have the same mom but different dads, or the same dad but different moms.

\*Sib is short for *sibling*.  
But way more fun to  
say (and read).

### Stepsiblings

You may get "stepsibs" if one of your parents marries someone else. Your new parent becomes your step-parent, and that stepparent's kids become your stepsibs. Even if you feel like stepping on your stepsibs sometimes, learning to get along with them can make life less stressful and more fun.

### Adopted siblings

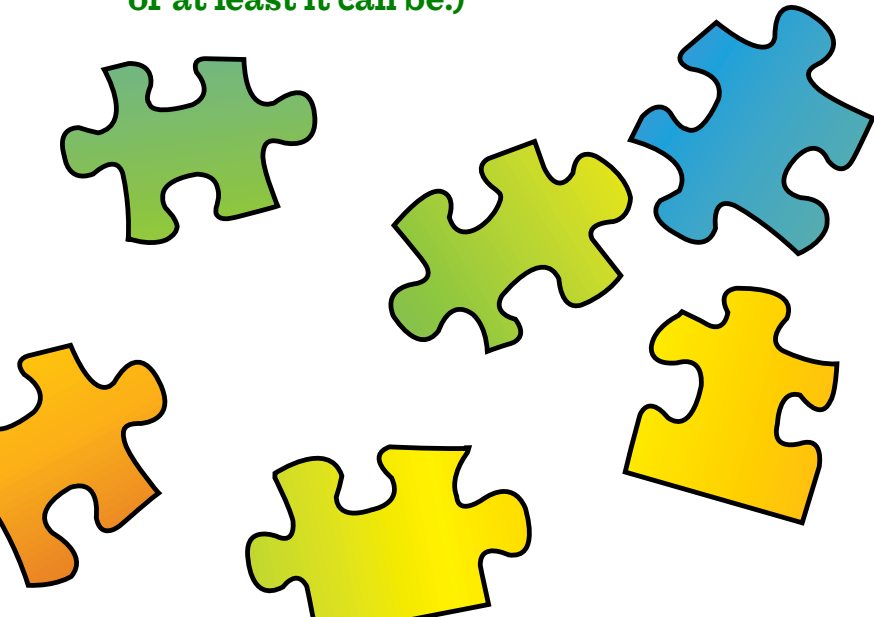
An adopted child may be of any age or race but when she or he becomes part of your family, you become siblings. Even if you're not related by birth or by your parents' marriage, you're now family.

Some parents temporarily take care of a child in need of a stable home. This is called *fostering*. (So you might have a foster sibling for a while.) If the foster parents decide to adopt, the child can become part of the family forever.



Your family may be big or small—there’s no “right” way for a family to look or be. The important thing to know is that you and your siblings are linked by more than just your parent(s).

- **You have many of the same experiences and memories.**
- **You probably share the same home, at least some of the time.**
- **You’re connected by . . . love. (Wait! Don’t gag! The love is there, or at least it can be.)**



## Strange *but* TRUE

The relationship you have with a sister or brother may be the **l-o-n-g-e-s-t** relationship you ever have in your life. Think about it. You not only grow up together but you may also grow *old* together.

When you’re grown up, you can hang out, celebrate holidays with each other, or even travel together. If you and your sibs have kids someday, they’ll all be cousins—and may become friends for life, too.



## What are sibs good for?

If you didn't have a brother or sister, life sure would be different—but not necessarily better. That's because a sib can be:

your friend

your buddy

your ally (someone who's on your side)

your helper

your secret-sharer

your protector

your mentor (someone who guides you)

your role model!

## 7 super things about sibs

### 1. Sibs are there for you.

When you want to play, hang out, joke around, talk, or just be next to someone, you don't have to pick up the phone—you have someone right at home. Your sibs are with you early in the morning or late at night, times when it's not as convenient to be around friends. And your sibs are often there for you during life's weirder moments, like when Aunt Bertie tells you long, boring stories about her cats. Best of all, your sibs are there to share the fun times—school breaks, birthdays, holidays, and special family celebrations.



## 2. Sibs can help you.

Need advice? Help with chores or homework? Got a problem you just can't solve on your own? Ask your sister or brother. A sib can be a great resource for you, especially if you're willing to help out in return. Older sibs often have good advice because they've been there. Younger sibs can be good listeners or "cheerer-uppers."

That's awesome!

you can do it!

way to go!

## 3. Sibs know the real you.

Even your closest friends don't always see every side of you. They may not know what you're like the moment you wake up, or on a bad day, or when you're crying your eyes out over a really sad movie. But your sibs know—because with them, you're totally yourself (and they love you anyway).



## 4. Sibs can share stuff with you.

A great thing about having sibs is that you can share games, electronics, sports equipment, and books. If you have older (or larger) sibs, they can hand down their clothes. If you have younger sibs, you get the fun of playing with toys you may have outgrown or doing activities usually meant for younger kids (finger paint all you want, no questions asked). Here are some other things you can share: secrets, dreams, hopes, and fears.

## 5. There's more "brain power."

Sometimes, you may need help with homework or a school project. Other times, you might need some pointers while working on an athletic skill. Maybe you're having trouble reaching a goal or solving a problem. If you and a sib work on these things together, you have twice the brain power than you have when working alone. It can be fun to help each other out.

## 6. There's room to grow.

The relationships you have with your siblings help teach you about yourself and the world. You learn about handling strong emotions like anger and disappointment. You see how your words affect the people close to you. And you discover that everyone needs a little something called *unconditional love*. (It means people love you for who you are, through and through, no matter what you do.)



## 7. Sibs look out for each other—and up to each other.

Maybe your brother watches out for you on the playground. Maybe your sister is your role model, inspiring you to work on your goals. Maybe your siblings teach you new skills—or you teach them. One of the coolest things about having siblings is that you know they have your back (and you have theirs). That can really boost your confidence.