EPILEPSY NEW ZEALAND
Kia titiro ki te tangata | See the person

Challenges faced by some siblings

While there are many positive aspects to being the brother or sister of a child living with epilepsy, some siblings may encounter challenges or difficulties from time to time.

Of course not all siblings will experience challenges. Most adjust well, while others may have some difficult times. Some children may appear to be coping well but show signs that they are feeling stressed at times. There may also be different reactions depending on whether the sibling is younger or older than the child living with epilepsy.

All siblings react differently, although some challenges and concerns can include feeling:

– Like their sibling matters more than they do

– Fear that their sibling's epilepsy may get worse

– That they are seen by others as the sibling of a child with epilepsy, rather than the individual he or she is

– Confused about any mixed feeling they have about their sibling (eg. love, anger, jealousy or resentment)

– Responsible for looking after and protecting their sibling (particularly at school or during peer activities)

– Embarrassed or sad about other's reactions to their sibling's epilepsy diagnosis

– Frustrated, sad or guilty about their sibling not being able to play in the same way they can, particularly if their brother or sister has any lifestyle restrictions

– Worried about the future for themselves and/or their sibling living with epilepsy

– The need to keep any worries or concerns to themselves and not burden parents or carers with these.

© 2026 Epilepsy NZ