

Talking to siblings about epilepsy

When speaking to siblings, ensure that your information is honest and realistic. Try to be factual, use positive language and undertake discussion that is age appropriate. For very young children there may not be a need to discuss their brother or sister's epilepsy as yet, and as they grow up it can be gradually mentioned at appropriate times.

When talking to a sibling you may want to:

- Explain how your child developed epilepsy, as their sibling may worry that they will also develop epilepsy or that they were the cause of it
- Discuss the language that your family want to use when it comes to epilepsy, so that the sibling starts to use those words or terms with others
- Explain that everyone is different, but try to limit over-emphasising your child's epilepsy diagnosis or allowing it to become a key feature of their identity
- Remind the sibling that they have more in common with their brother or sister than they have differences
- Reassure the sibling that their brother or sister can be expected to do and learn lots of things, but that their epilepsy, seizures and treatments may mean they need some assistance and understanding at times
- Assist the sibling to understand and know what to say to others (such as friends) when asked about their brother or sister's epilepsy.

Our Epilepsy New Zealand staff may be able to lead you to a good online site for children's audio stories or explanatory videos.

ENZ also has free copies of the story book "Because You are My Friend" in English and Maori.

[Campi the Seahorse at Kidshealth.org.nz](https://kidshealth.org.nz)

[Medikidz – Understanding Epilepsy](#)



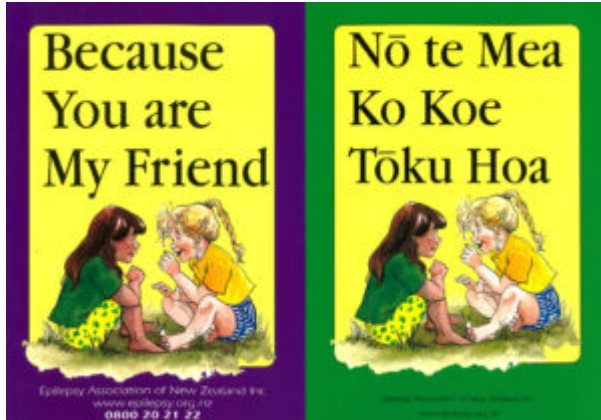
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