

WE ARE FAMILY – WHY is it so hard?

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Inclusion Fusion 2012

November 12-16, 2012



A sample of things we've been asked regarding WHY it's so hard as a family:

- ❑ Why do my typically developing children demand so much attention? Don't they know how much time it takes to care for the ONE with special needs?
- ❑ When the kids ask "Why do we have to take (xxx) with us, what am I to say?"
- ❑ Why do extended family seem so removed from us? We could really use their help!
- ❑ Why don't we get outside support from family and friends?
- ❑ When our typically developing kids ask, "Why don't you do things WE want to do?" how can I remedy that?
- ❑ Why can't we ask our kids (who are capable enough and old enough) to watch over the child with special needs?

Typically developing kids OFTEN don't get the same freedoms as their peers

- ❑ WE parents also DON'T get the same freedom as OUR PEERS!
- ❑ LIFE IS DIFFERENT AND WE MUST FIND A NEW NORMAL THAT WORKS FOR US!

Why do my typically developing children demand so much attention? Don't they know how much time it takes to care for the ONE with special needs?

- ❑ It's not their job to be aware of it....it is your job.
- ❑ Be sure to treat each other kindly. EVERYONE has value. (I Cor. 10:24, Rom. 15:2, Phil. 2: 3-4)
- ❑ Talk nicely to each other: no name calling, no yelling... etc.
- ❑ Be fair
- ❑ Don't play favorites
- ❑ Family meetings
- ❑ Family time ONE ON ONE

When the kids ask “Why do we have to take 😊 with us, what am I to say?”

- ❑ They are a PART OF THE FAMILY
- ❑ Find ways to INCLUDE everyone whatever you are doing-in all aspects of life.
- ❑ Recognize the pecking order and seat kids carefully and thoughtfully....
- ❑ Discuss things....like the times when the special needs child BOTHERS, HARASSES, POKES, INTERRUPTS, and/or causes the whole family to not get the sleep they need
- ❑ How to assimilate all the children:
 - ❑ MAKE THEM FEEL SPECIAL –
 - ❑ Keep your word
 - ❑ Take dates
- ❑ Allow grandparents to have each of the kids at DIFFERENT times.

Why do extended family seem so removed from us? We could really use their help!

- Sometimes they fear they'll get "STUCK" helping.
- Accept help, but don't take advantage of it.
- They fear manipulation or expectations about caring for your child.
- **INCLUDE THEM in FUN THINGS!**
- Ask for help in the simple things for starters

Why don't we get outside support from family and friends?

- ❑ Often -they have no idea that you even need help - you make it look easy.
- ❑ INVOLVE them in FUN things, not just the work...
- ❑ Consider asking if anyone has “leads” on people to help care
- ❑ Consider contacting, a trusted agency, your church, your county for support....
- ❑ IF someone offers, keep their name on a list.
- ❑ REMEMBER...they must be trained!

When our typically developing kids ask, “Why don’t you do things WE want to do?” how can I remedy that?

- A - Find things all of you can do together...Movie, Game night – cards, board games, video games, visiting someone or having guests over, swimming, going to a sports game, read a book together

WHATEVER YOU CAN DO – each of us will have different limitations and different options.

- B - Be creative – think outside the box...Can you “create” things together: drawing/painting – JUST FOR FUN!
- C - Find care for the child with special needs and PLAN to do what the others can do: Travel? Camping? Skating? Biking?
- D - You might want to travel to some foreign country but will have to settle for dinner out at a restaurant that has the cuisine of where you’d like to travel.

Why can't we ask our kids (who are capable enough and old enough) to watch over the child with special needs?
(You can, but be careful and sensitive)

- ❑ Everyone should have roles and responsibilities...
- ❑ They shouldn't be "on call" all the time.
- ❑ Show appreciation for their willingness to help.
(CINDERELLA STORY)
- ❑ Verbally compliment them

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Typically developing children (if included and cared for, too) tend to become:

- ❑ MORE AWARE of others with special needs
- ❑ SERVERS
- ❑ COMPASSIONATE (to their sibling and to others in general)
- ❑ PATIENT
- ❑ RESPONSIBLE

Caring for one with special needs can be hard on the marriage and on the kids.....

- Be Patient
- HAVE HUMOR!
- Have fun
- Cry and laugh together
- Ask questions – see how everyone is doing, then meet the needs

We'd love to stay in touch so we can take this
UNEXPECTED JOURNEY together

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