

Parenting with Special Needs



Highlights

As a parent with a disability, you may face challenges with everyday tasks. Getting support from family, friends, and formal support services is important. Talking openly with your child about your disability helps them understand what you can and can't do.

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What are some of the issues when parenting with a disability?

Raising children is challenging under any circumstances, but there can be additional challenges for parents with a disability. A disability might be:

a physical disability

an intellectual disability

a learning difficulty
a sensory disability

Many parents with a disability feel that their parenting is judged, making it difficult to ask for help or support.

How to get support when parenting with a disability

All parents need help to ensure their children thrive. Some parents with a disability may require individual support to assist them in their parenting role. If you're finding parenting difficult, it's important to reach out and ask for help. Support may come from:

healthcare providers, such as psychologists and occupational therapists
family and children's services
community groups and organizations

A supportive community is vital for families. Joining a playgroup can help reduce isolation. For older children, activities such as sports, homework clubs, or holiday camps may be beneficial.

How do I help my child to understand my disability?

Children are naturally curious and may have many questions about your disability. Talking openly with them can help them understand what you can and cannot do. It can also encourage empathy and understanding. As they grow up, children may become involved in supporting and caring for you by helping with household chores. Being involved in caring for a parent can:

help children develop a sense of responsibility
boost self-esteem when they feel valued for their contributions

However, young carers need support as well. Programs exist to provide information and counseling for young carers.

Where can I get help and support?

Parents with a disability may sometimes find it difficult to access formal

support services. Planning ahead and understanding available resources can help make things easier. Support can come from:

- a partner
- family and friends
- community groups
- disability and social services

Counseling can also provide emotional support for both parents and children.

Tools and Assistance

The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) provides practical advice for parents dealing with behavioral issues in children. Additional parenting support services may be available through:

- disability assistance programs
- parenting support hotlines
- community organizations

For more information, reach out to relevant parenting and disability support services in your area.