



# Informing Families

OF THEIR CHILD'S DISABILITY

## Telling Others about your child's disability



### Brothers and sisters

As a parent, you are best placed to decide how much information is appropriate to give your children. Much depends on their age, their level of understanding and their curiosity. Don't be afraid to involve your children as soon as possible. It's OK to show them you hurt if that is the case – they may well realise that already. Tell them in an honest and open way. They may not understand or remember all the information, so follow their lead, keep listening and answer their questions. Follow your children's lead in deciding what else to tell them.

### You may want to cover things like...

- It's not your fault that your brother/sister has a disability
- It just happened by chance.
- Children with a disability may find it harder to learn new things. They will want to join in and do the things you like doing but they might take longer learning how to do it and they may not be good at it.
- You can't catch a disability.
- It's very important to have brothers and sisters
- We love you very much and we love your brother/sister too.

*“ Your children will follow your lead. If you treat disability as just one aspect of your child's life, their siblings will too. ”*



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## Other people

*Telling family and friends can be very hard.*

*Only you know when and how it is best to tell other people.*

Sometimes you need to tell close friends or family so you have someone to cry with.

Sometimes it is easier to tell the most gossipy of your friends and ask them to pass the information around so that people know before they talk to you.

Sometimes it is best to wait until you have come to terms with the news yourself and are able to cope with the other person's reaction.

Only you can decide how much of your child's story to tell someone and which words to use.

Sometimes family, friends and people you meet say very insensitive and hurtful things. Try to ignore these comments. They are often based on misunderstandings.

People will follow your lead. If you are open, honest and positive about your child's condition they will be too.

You may find you are very sensitive to people you meet when you are out and about. You may not be sure if other people realise your child has a disability. You can choose whether or not to mention it.