

## My Little Brother

I have a brother with a disability called autism. It is hard for him to do things that we think are easy, like having a conversation. My mom tries really hard for him to understand things, but he just doesn't.

Sometimes I wish he didn't have autism and would just be a normal kid. It is really hard for my family to understand him and know what's on his mind sometimes. He can get really upset over little things, and loud sounds bother him.

When he was little, my mom and I used to drive him two hours to go to a special preschool each day for three years. Then, at night we used special flash cards to teach him to recognize emotions, sequence events and to say simple phrases like "yes" and "I don't know."

These days my brother goes to speech on Tuesdays after school, so I come too.

Sometimes when he comes out of speech, my mom tells me what he did. I thought the activities that he did sounded fun and easy, but to him they are difficult.

There are also things that he can do that I think are amazing. One night we were having a spelling bee at home when my dad said, "You are a better speller than me, but not your little brother." He also has a fantastic memory! He can tell you all the U.S. states and their capitols in order of when they became a state, and all the presidents and their birth dates. Most of all we love his piano playing skills. He can play a six-page song without even looking at the notes!

Whenever he accomplishes something new, I always feel so excited for him and think how much he's improved. Like the first time he rode his bike all by himself, I felt so happy and thought of when my mom said he may never be able to ride a bike. There he was, laughing and smiling away. At that moment I felt proud to be his big sister.

It's been tough. Lots of times we fight and get mad at each other, and I just wish he could understand. I get the fact that he has autism, and because of it, he has challenges but can also do so many wonderful things. Autism makes him who he is. He's happy and cute, and I'll always love my little brother.

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