

The Life of a Family With a Child Who Has Special Needs

Parents and family of those with special needs are always looking for accepting social interactions with others. These families are often excluded due to lack of awareness and communication.

Most families of children with special needs are financially strained, making it difficult to devote time and money to extra activities that interest them.

Children with special needs don't get the same opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities due to limited resources and support.

Having a child with special needs can sometimes take time away from others in the family, and needs go unmet.

Ice Breakers

I notice you have a daughter the same age as mine, do you think she would want to join our play group? Could you share a little bit about her with me?

I see your child has special needs, tell me a little bit about them?

I've noticed you have limited time for yourself, can I help you take some things off your plate? What would be of most help?

I teach piano lessons, I'd love to offer free lessons to your children. Do you have ideas about how I can gear my lessons toward your child with special needs to give them the best experience?

"Our neighbors have offered to take our son, who is disabled, with them on a weekly outing. This is a welcomed break from the demands that come with having a special needs child. Our other kids get time to do things with us that otherwise could be tricky without this added help. We are so grateful for their genuine friendship and support of our family."

- Utah Parent



**UNITED ANGELS
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**Teaching Others How They
Can Serve Individuals With
Special Needs And Their
Families In The Community**



Overcoming Discomfort

It is natural to hesitate to offer support to someone with a special needs child if you are unfamiliar with their condition. You may fear offending them for assuming they need help; or you may fear discovering that you don't actually have the skills to help in the way you hoped you could.

The best way to overcome your fear is to ask questions. You will be better equipped to be a friend and offer assistance if you give them a chance to educate you about the condition and how it affects them or their child.



Simple Ways to Give

Be Mindful & Inclusive

- Include the child with special needs and their siblings at neighborhood play groups
- Invite parents to game nights, dinners and outings
- Encourage youth to get to know those with special needs, include them in conversation, and invite them to social gatherings

Everyday Support/Respite

- Offer to take kids to and from school everyday
- Babysit, so that parents can run errands, go on dates, and have time with their other children
- Go grocery shopping for them
- Bring dinner once a week
- Provide house and yard maintenance (mow their lawn, sprinkler repair, house cleaning)

Share your Talents and Skills

- Help to prepare taxes
- Service their vehicles
- Take family photos or portraits
- Provide tutoring and homework help
- Offer music, art, swim lessons or other athletic coaching
- Offer to teach a person with special needs a trade skill



Group Projects and Ongoing Service

- Organize a half-day sports camp (soccer, tennis, basketball, football)
- Collect children's books to go to libraries in early interventions and classrooms
- Make or donate weighted, sensory blankets to early interventions or therapy centers
- Gather and donate sensory toys to preschools and early interventions
- Collect iPads or tablets to donate to special needs classrooms
- Host a special needs friendly event for families, teens, or children (carnival, dinner & dance, movie & picnic in the park)
- Plan a respite event for parents in your community
- Employ people with special needs at your place of business
- Plan a 5k to raise money for a local organization that supports those with disabilities