



TABLE 4.2 Potential Family Life Cycle Issues

Stage	Parental Issues	Sibling Issues
Early Childhood (Birth–Age 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtaining an accurate diagnosis• Informing siblings and relatives• Locating services• Seeking to find meaning in the exceptionality• Clarifying a personal ideology to guide decisions• Addressing issues of stigma• Identifying positive contributions of exceptionality• Setting great expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less parental time and energy for sibling needs• Feelings of jealousy over less attention• Fears associated with misunderstandings of exceptionality
School Age (Ages 5–12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing routines to carry out family functions• Adjusting emotionally to educational implications• Clarifying issues of mainstreaming [inclusion] vs. special class placement• Participating in IEP conferences• Locating community resources• Arranging for extracurricular activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Division of responsibility for any physical care needs• Oldest female sibling possibly being at risk• Limited family resources for recreation and leisure• Informing friends and teachers• Possible concern about younger sibling surpassing older• Issues of “mainstreaming” into same school• Need for basic information on exceptionality
Adolescence (Ages 12–21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjusting emotionally to possible chronicity of exceptionality• Identifying issues of emerging sexuality• Addressing possible peer isolation and rejection• Planning for career/vocational development• Arranging for leisure time activities• Dealing with physical and emotional changes of puberty• Planning for postsecondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overidentification with sibling• Greater understanding of differences in people• Influence of exceptionality on career choice• Dealing with possible stigma and embarrassment• Participation in sibling training programs• Opportunity for sibling support groups
Adulthood (Ages 21+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning for possible need for guardianship• Addressing the need for appropriate adult implications of dependency• Addressing the need for socialization opportunities outside the family for individuals with exceptionality• Initiating career choice or vocational program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possible issues of responsibility for financial support• Addressing concerns regarding genetic implications• Introducing new in-laws to exceptionality• Need for information on career/living options• Clarifying role of sibling advocacy• Possible issues of guardianship

SOURCE: Adapted from A. Turnbull and H. Turnbull, *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: A Special Partnership*, 2nd ed. (Columbus, OH: Merrill, 1990), pp. 134–135.