



# Educational Spotlight

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## “Siblings” September 2021



### **Tell us a little about yourself & your family.**

My name is Chloe and I am the oldest sibling of 4. We grew up in a small town in Nebraska and lived on a farm our whole childhood. I have 2 younger sisters, Addie (20) and Jayce (23), and a younger brother, Brady (18). Jayce and Brady both have a diagnosis of microcephaly, which means that their heads are smaller than normal. This comes with developmental delays and affects most aspects of their everyday lives. Jayce and Brady are some of the best people I know. Jayce loves to sing, go on car rides, and eat ice cream. Brady loves cops, "cool cars" (any sports car), sports, and music.

### **What was it like growing up with Jayce and Brady?**

It is such a unique experience and one that has taught me so much. It has shaped who I am as a person. Different siblings take on the role of being a sibling differently and for me, I took on a more “motherly role.” I was a mother hen to my siblings. This all caused me to mature incredibly quickly over the course of my life. Being a sibling to Brady and Jayce helped me to make the best connections and I am able to see others as more alike than different and have greater empathy and compassion.



**What do you and your siblings enjoy doing together?**

We love to go on drives and listen to high school musical music. We also love to go to the movies, go shopping, and other places out in the community. Brady and I like to play basketball or catch together.

**Any challenges of being a sibling of someone with a disability?**

One of the more difficult parts of my experience as a sib has been knowing that people think differently and less than of my brother and sister. The stares from others whenever we go out in public are never-ending. It is difficult that not everyone sees my sibling and others like them in the same way that I do, however, it is my biggest honor to be on their team and advocate for them.

**What is some advice you'd give to someone who has a sibling with a disability?**

I would encourage other siblings to explore their identity outside of being a sib. This is something that I didn't do until the last couple of years. Explore your interests, passions, etc.! You are valued as a person and have strengths and assets that are unique to you. That is something I want all siblings to hear.



**What kinds of sibling groups have you attended & what did you learn?**

Growing up, I didn't really get any opportunities to be involved in any sibling groups. That was something that I wish would have been more available and accessible to me. A couple of month ago, I got to attend the Sibling Leadership Network Conference as a representative for Abilities First and it was one of the most incredible experiences that I have had. I was with over 200 people who had a shared experience with me, which was so powerful. Everyone in the room knew the things I had been through and experienced.



**Tell us a little about yourself & your family.**

My name is Honor and I am 11 years old and I have a twin brother, Brogan and a little brother, Ridge. I like making bracelets and snuggling my cat Pixie. And I like arts and crafts, my mom likes playing with us my dad likes cooking breakfast on the grill. My brother Brogan likes to dress up in his hulk costume and we all play together. I think my family is sweet and kind.

**What is it like being a twin?**

Sometimes it's hard because sometimes me and Brogan don't get along and sometimes there are a lot of things we do that are different; he has a lot of therapies he has to go to.

**What do you like to do for fun?**

I like to make loom bracelets, charms and rings and play with my brothers and make art.

**What do you & Your brothers enjoy doing together?**

We love playing together, swimming and riding our bikes

**Do your siblings ever get on each other's nerves?**

YES! Brogan... he sometimes says bad words and Ridge.... we argue over the simplest things like who gets to pick the last TV show.

**What is some advice you'd give to someone who has a brother who is autistic?**

I'd say you're doing a great job at helping your brother and be nice to him!



### **What kinds of sibling groups have you attended & what did you learn?**

My Mom signed me up for an Easter Seals Sib Shop and I learned a lot of things about other people and the things we have in common... like siblings that have autism can be mean at times and say nice things too.

### **What do you want to be/ do when you grow up?**

I want to be someone who teaches horse lessons and a mom.

### **How about your brothers?**

Ridge wants to be a police officer and an artist and Brogan wants to be a fireman

### **Resources:**

[Children with disability: helping siblings | Raising Children Network](#)

[www.siblingleadership.org](http://www.siblingleadership.org)

– to find a chapter

[Sibshops | Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center \(SARRC\) \(autismcenter.org\)](#)

[www.siblingresources.org](http://www.siblingresources.org)

[www.siblingsupport.org](http://www.siblingsupport.org)

[Support Group for Siblings of Autism and Special Needs | Facebook](#)

### **There are Facebook groups for siblings as well!**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/siblingnetwork/>

[SibNet on Facebook | Facebook](#)

