

Roles/Stereotypes

Through parents, media and friends, many may develop ideas of what roles siblings have in the family.

"I feel like I have to be a role model, a standard of what should be done, so it puts pressure on me," said Aragon alumnus and college freshman Liam Kennedy, the older sibling to two brothers. "They see what I do ... [and I am] showing them the path they can take."

While Kennedy feels he fits the role of the older brother, senior Zachary Lafrance feels he defies the expectations placed on twins, which include sharing the same interests.

"We like different things and have different friends," Lafrance said. "[For example], he likes watching movies [while] I don't. He enjoys physics and English, and I like history and science [like biology]."

Likewise, junior Laura Lipton has independent interests from her twin brother; however, she describes a more traditional relationship with her older sister. "My sister and I have bonded over things that are traditionally feminine," Lipton said. "She likes doing makeup or hair. But my [twin] brother and I still like to get ready together. We have the same bathroom, so we put on clothes and do a little Liv and Maddie impression [while] doing our routine in the morning."



Simone Hsu (alumnus) & Adele Hsu (11)



Alexander Xie (11) and Ethan Xie (12)

Changes over Time

As siblings get older, their dynamics often change, some growing apart.

"My sister and I used to play together [in elementary school] because we were close in age," said junior Adele Hsu, who has an older sister. "One day, there was suddenly a clique where my sister was hanging out with her friend and all of a sudden, she said, 'you can't hang out with us.' That's when we started to draw apart." However, time can also change relationships for the better. For senior Zachary Lafrance, though growing older has given him a new sense of independence, it hasn't forced him to grow apart from his twin brother Elliot. "Growing up and having money, relationships, jobs, extra-curriculars, our relationship has become more mature," Lafrance said. "We can't always joke around or have as much time together. I think over time, it's become more developed, a more wholehearted relationship, and with the time we do have to spend together, we spend it well."

For some siblings, growing older has meant being able to spend more time together. Especially when siblings are at the same school, they are able to interact more often.

"Whenever I change schools, I end up becoming closer to the sibling that I'm at that school with," said freshman Oliver Levitt, who has an older and younger brother. "Once I moved to Aragon, I got closer to [my older brother] because we started to share similar interests. I did the musical with him, and now I'm in the play with him, so we start to develop closer relationships when I start to get more involved with similar activities."



Laura Lipton (11) and Brett Lipton (10)

Everyday Life

After seeing his brother, senior Ethan Xie, participate in swimming and basketball, junior Alexander Xie decided to do the same, but not for long.

"I quit both of them because [Ethan] was way better than me," Xie said. "I did [volleyball instead] so I could be better than him at something. My parents don't compare me to my brother anymore ... I'm doing my own separate thing."

Siblings continually influence each other's everyday lives and hobbies. Oftentimes, younger siblings may feel like their individuality is hidden under their older sibling's shadow.

"When I want to do the same thing [as my brothers], it almost feels like copying," said freshman and middle child Oliver Levitt. "Even when it might be something that I enjoy just as much, if not more."

Disagreements and arguments are a common aspect of sibling relationships. Senior Kendall Makuta and her sister freshman Emerson Makuta's first "fight" took place at the young ages of seven and four.

"We were fighting because our parents wanted us to wear matching clothes for a family photoshoot," Kendall Makuta said. "We were absolutely stubborn [that] we did not want to match. We were... trying to tear the [matching] clothes off of each other. [Ultimately], our parents ended up letting us change."

Despite the occasional disagreements, siblings offer each other support and comfort.

"When I'm bored, I can come over to [my siblings' rooms]," said junior Laura Lipton. "I have a buddy I can go to school with. We can encourage each other to do homework."

While some siblings struggle to maintain their individuality in the midst of comparisons and expectations, others learn to overcome their conflicts, generating a closer bond.



Kendall Makuta (12) and Emerson Makuta (9)



Milestones

Milestones such as getting a phone, finding a sport one loves and excelling at a class may seem like a huge accomplishment, but when siblings are constantly achieving at different times, the perception of milestones change.

Senior Nickalus Ketcham creates the expectation for his younger sister, freshman Madison Ketcham.

"Everything I do, she kind of does," Ketcham said. "[My] parents are familiar with [what I do] so they enroll her. I do baseball, she does softball, I do soccer, she does soccer."

On the other hand, some younger siblings choose to set different goals than their siblings. Junior Adriana Peraza, who has an older brother in college, notes how differing priorities have led to differing achievements and skill sets.

"I still don't know how to drive," Peraza said. "[My brother] does because he actually left time to do that ... [while I focused on] ... school and tutor[ing]." Some, like senior Zachary Lafrance, see an older sibling's milestone as a benchmark for their own life. Lafrance's older sister received her first phone at nine years old, therefore, Lafrance and his twin brother expected the same treatment.

"When we turned nine, we said, 'We want phones, now,' said Lafrance. "My parents said no. We had reached the age when she got it, but for them, she had a phone because she was older, not because she turned nine. They ... thought of her as ahead, even if we had reached that same age."



Keira McLintock (10) and Darra McLintock (9)



Simone Hsu (alumnus) & Adele Hsu (11)

Sharing

People often have different views and experiences when it comes to sharing. Some perceive sharing as a useful custom that helps strengthen their bond, while others find it irritating that they constantly have to share aspects of their life with their siblings.

As a twin and younger sister, junior Laura Lipton describes the convenience of sharing clothes with siblings.

"Hand-me-down clothing from my sister was all I wore when I was younger," said Lipton. "But that makes sense. Why buy new clothes for me? [It's] bad for the economy, bad for the [environment]. My brother has such cool clothes, so sometimes I [also] like to steal his shirts."

However, not all siblings are open to sharing their belongings. "One time my brother got me a gift for Christmas, then a week later, he asked for it back, which I think kind of paints a picture," said freshman Erin Finn.

Sharing a bedroom with a sibling is another common practice, and it may cause conflicts if each person has a different routine they are accustomed to.

"We shared on and off when we were younger," said sophomore Keira McLintock, the oldest of three. "It was a little annoying because the youngest would be asleep at 7 p.m. and me and my sister would still be up at 8 or 9."

Freshman Oliver Levitt and his two brothers share the same friends, causing them to spend more time together.

"My younger brother shares a lot with my friends," Levitt said. "He's grown close to my group. My older brother shares some of my friends from theater, but [fewer]. Usually, younger brothers try to become closer with their older brothers' friends."



Alexander Xie (11) and Ethan Xie (12)



Leo Levitt (11), Oliver Levitt (9) and Joel Levitt