

Including Siblings in Future Planning

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Supportive Initiative for Brothers and Sisters in New Jersey (SIBS NJ)

- **SIBS NJ** is the only organization in New Jersey dedicated solely to supporting and connecting the siblings of people with developmental disabilities and mental health issues. This grass roots organization seeks to enhance the quality of life for siblings of all ages and helps siblings connect with each other.
- **SIBS NJ Offers:**
 - Pop-up Workshops and Groups
 - Speakers
 - Adult Meet-ups
 - Connecting Online
 - Presentations
 - Email Alerts
 - Information and Referral

www.facebook.com/sibsnj
info.sibsnj@gmail.com



My Story

Meet Kristen (L) & Katie (C)



Deciding on a Plan – Difficult Conversations

1 | Decide What Parents Want

- Ideal v. Realistic
- Educate Yourself on all Variables
- Speak with other family members

2 | Ask What Sibling(s) Want(s)

- What is their vision for their sibling/self?
 - Concerns/ Fears/ Hopes?
 - Education on the resources/tools out there

3 | Honor emotions & Discuss

- Over time – start earlier; if time is short, be solutions focused
- Enlist professional support/allot time

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute

- The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute provides caregivers with the necessary resources and education to access the appropriate supports and services for their loved one.
 - The Supporting Siblings Project provides parents and organizations with the tools needed to support siblings throughout their life and offers siblings resources and community support.
 - Information and referral line for adult sibs
 - Request a speaker
 - Sibshops for young sibs
 - Ways to support sibs
 - Fact sheets, webinars and videos
 - Sibling Podcast Series
 - Information on Family Medical Leave specifically for sibs

bit.ly/supportingsiblingsproject



Ways to Include Siblings throughout their Lives

- Talk about disability and involve sibs in the community
- Use resources (visit SIBS NJ and the Supporting Siblings Project websites)
- Be open to the issues – siblings fight and have their ups and downs regardless of disability, talk about them!
- Validate their experiences
- Introduce your sibs to other sibs
- Build in time just for them, if they want it
- TALK about the future – developmentally appropriate language & timeline
- Age appropriately, bring siblings to meetings (Ex. IEP, future planning)
- Plan for the future & expose your kids to services/service delivery systems
- Discuss housing options
- Attend workshops, conferences and trainings together

Resources for Siblings

- SibNet
- Sibling Support Project
- Sib Shops (for younger & teen sibs)
- Books: [Views from Our Shoes](#), [The Sibling Survival Guide](#), [The Sibling Slam Book](#), [Thicker Than Water: Essays by Adult Siblings](#)
- Sibling Leadership Network (SLN)
- The Arc of NJ/ Local Arcs/ The Boggs Center/ DRNJ – aka ANY resources your parents access, you can too!

Questions

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