



Staff Development Tip Sheet for Engaging with Siblings

1. **Include the sibling perspective in staff orientation and training.** Teach staff members how to identify and engage siblings.

- Offer staff members the chance to listen to family panels, with siblings represented on the panel.
- For example, hosting a sibling panel presentation at your organization for family members to attend is a great way to engage siblings in an educational way. You can invite a few siblings to present their sibling story and most siblings are honored to be asked to share. Siblings and other family members can attend the session to hear the stories and perspectives of the panelists which can provide insight and be thought-provoking for everyone involved.

2. **Read about sibling relationships**

- a. *Riding the Bus with My Sister* by Rachel Simon
- b. *Special Siblings: Growing up with Someone with a Disability, Revised Edition* by Mary McHugh
- c. *How to Be a Sister: A Love Story with a Twist of Autism* by Eileen Garvin
- d. *Being the Other One: Growing Up with a Brother or Sister Who Has Special Needs* by Kate Strohm
- e. *Brothers and Sisters* by Peggy Gallagher, Thomas Powell, Cheryl Rhodes

3. **It is important to keep learning.** Here are some sites and resources that will help you learn more. Many of these websites offer free registrations and will keep you updated on issues that are important to siblings.

- SIBLINGRESOURCES <http://siblingresources.org/>

SiblingResources is an exciting collaboration between Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University, The Sibling Leadership Network, and SibsNY. Through a grant from NYSDDPC, we are building the community for adult siblings of individuals with disabilities in NY. Please visit this website to learn more and register to stay connected to important information.

- SIBLING LEADERSHIP NETWORK <http://www.siblingleadership.org/>

The Sibling Leadership Network (SLN) is a national nonprofit organization that provides siblings of individuals with disabilities the information, support, and tools to advocate with their brothers and sisters and to promote the issues important to them and their entire families.

➤ SIBSNY <http://www.sibsnny.org/>

SibsNY is a volunteer organization dedicated to providing the siblings of individuals with intellectual, developmental and learning disabilities with information and support. SibsNY is the NY state chapter of the national SLN.

➤ SIBLING SUPPORT PROJECT <http://www.siblingsupport.org/>

The Sibling Support Project is a national effort dedicated to the life-long concerns of brothers and sisters of people who have special health, developmental, or mental health concerns.

Consider hosting Sibshop for younger siblings or a Sibshop Facilitator Training at your agency. [Sibshops](#) are lively events for young brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. With an emphasis on wellness and fun, Sibshops give children and teens a chance to meet other sibs, play outrageous games, talk about the good (and not-so-good) parts of having a sib with special needs with others who “get it” and have even more fun!

Sibshops are often facilitated by adult brothers and sisters of people with disabilities, so this is a great way to encourage adult sibling participation. To find a Sibshop near you, visit: <http://www.siblingsupport.org/about-sibshops/find-a-sibshop-near-you>