

Sibling Support Group

For Brothers and sisters
(ages 8-12)
of Children
with Disabilities

What is a sibling support group?

It is a group for and about brothers and sisters of persons with developmental disabilities. Siblings meet to talk about their mutual concerns and feelings. They gain information regarding the specific problems of their brothers and sisters and come to realize that their family and personal situations are not necessarily unique. The groups are fun, informative and provide a great deal of support.

Who can participate?

Any child between the ages of 8 and 12 years old. We generally try to run groups for individuals of the same approximate age level. How many groups and when they are offered depends on the number of individuals interested.

Who runs the groups?

Tom Fish, Ph.D., LISW at The Ohio State University Nisonger Center is the director of Family Support Services. Graduate students from the OSU College of Social Work will facilitate the group sessions.

What is included?

Groups are held weekly for six weeks and sessions last one hour. The groups involve structured activities which vary depending upon the ages and interests of the members. However, each group is set up to meet the individual and collective needs of the participants. The idea is to promote expression, enhance problem-solving skills and increase knowledge and understanding of developmental disabilities. Activities may include: role playing, arts and crafts, educational games, reading books/stories and group projects.

What is the track record of the Sibling Support Group?

Excellent! Over the past 22 years, 500 children have been involved in the sibling group. The children have raved about their experiences and many children have participated in more than one group. Feedback from parents about the Sibling Support Group has been extremely positive.

What role do parents play?

Parents are the key to the success of the Sibling Support Group. Parents need to recognize the importance of their children's involvement and to encourage their participation. We attempt to provide parents feedback on the child's experience in the group yet at the same time view the group as something unique for the child. Parents are not involved in the group sessions.

How can we sign up or find out more information?

Everyone is encouraged to take advantage of this unique and rewarding opportunity. Contact Tom Fish by phone, 614.292.7550, or e-mail, fish.1@osu.edu

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