

Creating Supports for Adolescent Siblings of Individuals with Disabilities

LEND Project

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Statement of the Problem



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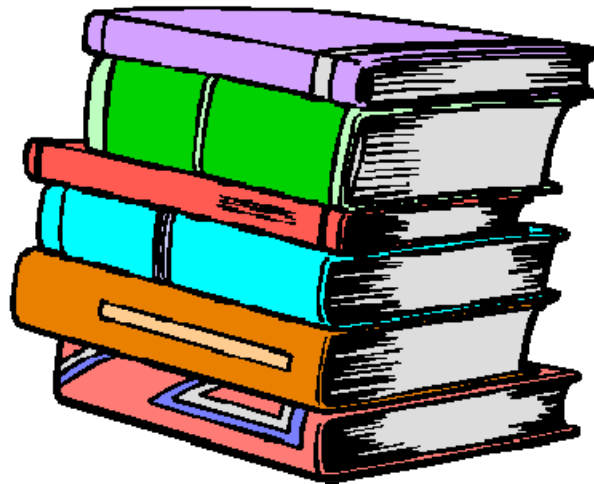
- “The sibling relationship is perhaps the most long-lasting and influential relationship of a person’s life” (Gallagher, Powell, & Rhodes, 2006, p. 16).
- There are a multitude of factors that may influence the relationship between siblings, including birth order, number of children, age between siblings, other constellation variables, socioeconomic status, religion, and parental attitudes and expectations (Gallagher, et al., 2006).
- Having a sibling with a disability uniquely impacts the relationship, and produces both positive and negative outcomes for the siblings.



Statement of Problem

- Several disability professionals and advocates have emphasized the importance of establishing sibling support networks for this unique population (Kaplan & Colombatto, 1966; Meyer, Vadasy, & Fewell, 1985).
- Sibshops were established in 1985 (Meyer, et al.).
- Modification of the material for adolescent participants is recommended, yet the content of such alterations has not been established in the literature.
- Needs assessments must be done to assess the support needs of adolescents.

Literature Review





Literature Review - Overview

- Sibling relationships
- Siblings of individuals with disabilities
 - Positives
 - Negatives
- Lack of evidence-based research on sibling support programs
- Lack of research on adolescent experiences of having a sibling with a disability



Hypotheses

1. Adolescent siblings of individuals with disabilities will have different support needs than siblings ages 8-13
2. Adolescents will be open to some type of support



Research Questions

1. What types of supports, if any, do adolescent siblings of individuals with disabilities ages 14-16 want?
2. How should sibling support projects for adolescents ages 14-16 be structured to most appropriately fit the developmental needs of the sibling?

Methodology



Research Design

- Qualitative interview
 - In-person interview to discuss their experiences as a sibling of an individual with a disability





Sample

- Participants ages 14-16
 - Must have a sibling with a disability
- Recruited through Connecticut family listservs
- Goal is to screen 7 to 25 participants



Measurement & Instruments

- Interview questions
- Data gathered until saturation
- Answers were transcribed and tally counts were used to describe results



IRB Concerns

- Required full IRB approval
- Consent needed by both the participant and his/her parent
 - This will be obtained at the interview (prior to starting the interview)

Results & Discussion



Response Rate

	N
Participants Screened	5
Participants Qualified	3
Participants Interviewed	1

Discrepancy in participants qualified and participants interviewed due to refusal to do face-to-face interview and another interview not yet scheduled.

Results

Sibling Support Project Logistics	Results
•Are you interested in participating in a sibling support project?	Yes
•Distance willing to travel to sibling support project?	Less than one hour
•How often groups should meet?	Once per month
•How long should groups meet?	One to two hours
•Where should the group meet?	No preference

Results cont...

- What would make sibling support projects more appealing?
 - Activities in and of themselves are appealing enough
- What topics should be discussed?
 - Type of disability the sibling has
 - How to deal with having a sibling with a disability
 - Daily life with a sibling with a disability
- What additional activities should be included?
 - Outdoor activities/games
 - Cooking
 - Arts and/or crafts



Implications

- Guidelines for creating a sibling support project for adolescents
- Inform future practice of working with siblings of individuals with disabilities
- Provide guidance for counselors, teachers, social workers, psychologists, and other professionals
- General awareness of the needs of siblings



Limitations

- Lack of random selection
- Results may not be generalizable
- Interviewer bias
- Benefits of this study outweigh potential limitations



Areas for Future Research

- Data-based interventions for sibling supports for adolescents
- Effectiveness of all sibling support projects must be established
- Most salient aspect of sibling support programs
- Support needs for older adolescent siblings (ages 17-19)

Questions & Comments

- Questions?
- Comments?

Please contact Megan at krell.m@gmail.com with any questions or comments!



Works Cited

- Gallagher, P., Powell, T., & Rhodes, C. (2007). *Brothers & sisters: A special part of exceptional families* (3rd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.
- Kaplan, B. & Colombatto, J. (1966). Head start program for siblings of mentally retarded children. *Mental Retardation*, 4, 30-32.
- Meyer, D., Vadasy, P., & Fewell, R. (1985). *Sibshops: A handbook for implementing workshops for siblings of children with special needs*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.