

THE SIBLING CENTER

FOR SISTERS & BROTHERS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Erica, age 7



**SHORT-TERM AND ONGOING SUPPORT
GROUPS FOR**

**CHILDREN
ADOLESCENTS
ADULTS**

**INDIVIDUAL THERAPY REFERRALS FOR
TREATMENT AND CONSULTATION**

EDUCATION AND PRESENTATIONS

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Postage



THE SIBLING CENTER is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the emotional health and well-being of siblings of people with disabilities through mutual support and shared experience under professional guidance.

SIBLINGS

An individual with a disability can have a profound impact on the lives of every member of the family. This is true whether the person suffers from a mental or physical disability, at any stage of the life cycle. The powerful bond that usually exists between sisters and brothers is deeply altered when one sibling has special needs.

Brothers and sisters of people with disabilities may find it difficult to talk about these feelings to parents, teachers and friends. Furthermore, adults and older adolescents may feel profoundly uncertain and deeply concerned about what the future holds and what role they may play in the ongoing care of their siblings. Children may be resentful, and then feel guilty, about the way their lives are affected by the special needs of their physically and/or mentally challenged family member. They may not fully understand why their roles differ so much from those of their friends in unaffected families.

SPECIAL NEEDS FAMILIES



Parents face unique challenges in the prospect of raising a special-needs child, and caregivers may experience significant difficulties. Support groups offer people in similar circumstances the opportunity to hear other perspectives and let them know they are not alone.

People with disabled siblings often feel isolated and alone. Feelings of love, caring, and compassion can conflict with feelings of frustration, anger, embarrassment and loss. Most can benefit from participating in short and long-term support groups, which provide a safe and accepting environment in which to express their feelings and share their experiences.



Support groups are offered for 6-8 year olds, 9-12 year olds, and adolescents, in order to provide the optimum setting for addressing issues specific to developmental stage.

REFERRALS: While support groups can be effective for most of the people we work with, some may benefit from brief or ongoing individual therapy instead of or in combination with group work. Families are encouraged to seek additional services when appropriate and are provided with assistance in doing so.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: Professionals and other interested groups benefit from educational programs which provide information about approaches to meeting the unmet needs of siblings of people with disabilities.

PRESENTATIONS: Presentations and open houses are made throughout the year for siblings, caregivers, and other concerned individuals.

