



Siblings Australia Inc

Siblings Australia is the only organisation in Australia that is dedicated to addressing the life-long concerns of brothers and sisters of people with special needs (chronic illness, disability and/or mental health issues).

Research and anecdotal evidence supports the view that illness and disability affects the lives of *all* family members. Our focus is on strengthening families, through increasing awareness and skills at three levels:

- *providing direct support to siblings*
- *enabling parents to be more able to support all of their children*
- *improving the capacity of organisations to support siblings and the whole family*

The sibling relationship is often the longest of any. We think it is vital that the needs of siblings are acknowledged and that they are connected to sources of support. As a result, they are likely to develop stronger self esteem and coping skills. They are also likely to develop a closer relationship with the child with special needs.

About Sibworks

Sibworks is a therapeutic support program aimed at siblings of children with special needs aged 8 to 12 years. The program was developed and written by Kate Strohm (Executive Director, Siblings Australia) and Dr Monique Nesa (Curtin University, WA). Both authors have had a long history working in sibling support and the program grew out of their combined experiences.

Program Aims

The program aims to provide an opportunity to:

- *Have a fun experience*
- *Connect with other siblings*
- *Better understand their brother or sister's special needs*
- *Share their feelings with others who understand, in a safe environment*
- *Develop coping skills for the challenging situations they may face*
- *Explore the strengths and uniqueness of themselves as well as their brother or sister with special needs*
- *Explore and enhance siblings' support networks*
- *Strengthen siblings' communication and relationships with their families and friends*

Six Week Program

Each week, the group will discuss a different theme relating to their relationship as a sibling.

Week 1: Getting to know each other

Week 2: Exploring differences

Week 3: Friendly and not-so-friendly feelings

Week 4: Problem squashing

Week 5: Wiping out worries

Week 6: Feeling stronger and supported

Each week will build on their knowledge and understanding. In some cases the program will be run over two days in school holidays.

Registration

We encourage families to register their interest with Siblings Australia for the next program. We attempt to run programs all over Adelaide, particularly where there are clusters of families who have registered for the program.

It is extremely important families register for the groups, because this is likely to help us access funding.

Contact Us

If you would like to register your details, please phone the office on 8357 1214 or email your details to info@siblingsaustralia.org.au.