



Sibshops provide siblings of kids with disabilities with peer support and information in a lively, recreational setting.

For the adults who run them and for the agencies that sponsor them, Sibshops are evidence of their loving concern for the family member who will have the longest-lasting relationship with a person who has a disability. However, for the kids who attend them, Sibshops are lively, pedal-to-the-metal events where they will:

- **Meet** other sibs (usually for the first time);
- **Have** fun;
- **Talk** about the good and not-so-good parts of having a sib with support needs with others who “get it”;
- **Play** some great games;
- **Explore** how other siblings handle sticky situations sometimes faced by sibs;
- **Laugh**;
- **Learn** about the services their brothers and sister receive; and
- **Have** some more fun!

The Sibshop curriculum is used throughout the United States and Canada and in Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Argentina, Ecuador, Iceland, Ireland, England, Italy, Malta, Singapore, and Turkey.

Learn more about Sibshops:

- [Find a Sibshop near you](#)
- [University of Washington Study](#) on the impact of Sibshops
- Learn how to [start a Sibshop](#) in your community
- Get a copy of the [Sibshop curriculum](#)
- [Sibshop T-shirts, Sweatshirts, Mugs and More!](#)

FAQs about Sibshops

What are Sibshops?

For the adults who run them and for the agencies that sponsor them, Sibshops are evidence of their loving concern for the family member who will have the longest-lasting relationship with a person who has a disability. However, for the kids who attend them, Sibshops are pedal-to-the-metal events where they will meet other sibs (usually for the first time), have

fun, laugh, talk about the good and not-so-good parts of having a sib with special needs, play some great games, learn something about the services their brothers and sister receive, and have some more fun.

Are Sibshops a form of therapy?

Sibshops may be “therapeutic” for kids to attend, but they are not therapy. The Sibshop model takes a wellness perspective. They’re a celebration of the many lifelong contributions made by brothers and sisters of people with special health and developmental needs.

Who attends Sibshops?

Sibs, of course! Most Sibshops are for sibs of kids with special developmental concerns, including intellectual and developmental disabilities. Increasingly, Sibshops are being offered for brothers and sisters of kids with health concerns (often at children’s hospitals), and we’re beginning to see Sibshops emerge for sibs of kids with mental health concerns. While Sibshops were developed for sibs in the 8-13 year-old age range, Sibshops (depending on the community) are being offered for sibs as young as six and increasingly for teens as well.

Who sponsors Sibshops?

A wide range of agencies sponsor Sibshops: early intervention centers, school districts, children’s hospitals, chapters of the Arc, Easter Seals programs, autism societies, Down syndrome groups, developmental disabilities councils, Jewish community centers, churches, parks and recreation programs, etc. Often, local agencies work with other like-minded agencies to cosponsor one Sibshop for all the brothers and sisters in a given community.

Who facilitates Sibshops?

We like to have both family members and professionals as a part of the Sibshop leadership. Parents are often the driving force in getting a Sibshop started, but they are not always the best people to run the Sibshops their own children attend. Still, there is plenty of behind-the-scenes work for parents to do to support a Sibshop effort. We very much like having adult sibs as Sibshop facilitators—and adult sibs tell us that they get much out of running the program. The facilitator who is a service provider will know about the special needs represented in the group and about services available in the community. Regardless of whether the facilitator is a family member or service provider, we seek certain qualities in a good Sibshop facilitator. We want them to truly enjoy the company of kids and have had experience working with kids; to be especially good listeners; and to have the ability to convey a sense of joy, wonder, and fun.

What is the optimal number for a Sibshop?

<https://siblingsupport.org/sibshops/>

We like somewhere between a dozen and twenty kids, but there are successful Sibshop programs where there are as few as five participants.

Where can I find a Sibshop near me?

There are over 550 Sibshops in almost every state and countries ranging from Argentina to Iceland to Nigeria. [See a directory of registered Sibshops.](#)

How do I start a Sibshop in my community?

Thank you for your interest in starting a Sibshop! We are thrilled that you are considering joining the Sibshop family in order to support young brothers and sisters in your community.

- Learn. The first step in launching a Sibshop is to learn more about the Sibshop model by reading our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and the [Sibshop Standards of Practice](#). The Sibshop Standards help assure that when parents send their children to a program that calls itself a “Sibshop” it is a program that reflects the goals and values of the Sibshop model.
- Become Certified. The next step is to complete our [Sibshop Facilitator Certification Training](#). We require at least one member of every Sibshop Team to be certified as a First Generation Sibshop Facilitator by completing our training.
- Register. After you complete the Sibshop Facilitator Certification Training, you will [register your Sibshop here](#) at no cost. This is an important step which will include your program in our online directory of registered Sibshops, where families often search for sibling support in their local communities.
- Join. When you register your Sibshop, you will also join the [Sibshop Facilitator Forum](#). Please complete both steps at the same time, only when you are ready to provide dates and details of your first Sibshop.

If you have additional questions, please contact us at info@siblingsupportproject.org or 425-362-6421.

Do you have other questions about Sibshops?

If so, please write or call us. We’d be happy to answer any questions you may have.

- Phone: 425-362-6421
- Email: info@siblingsupport.org
- Contact us [here](#)