

Providing supports to children who have a sibling with a Disability

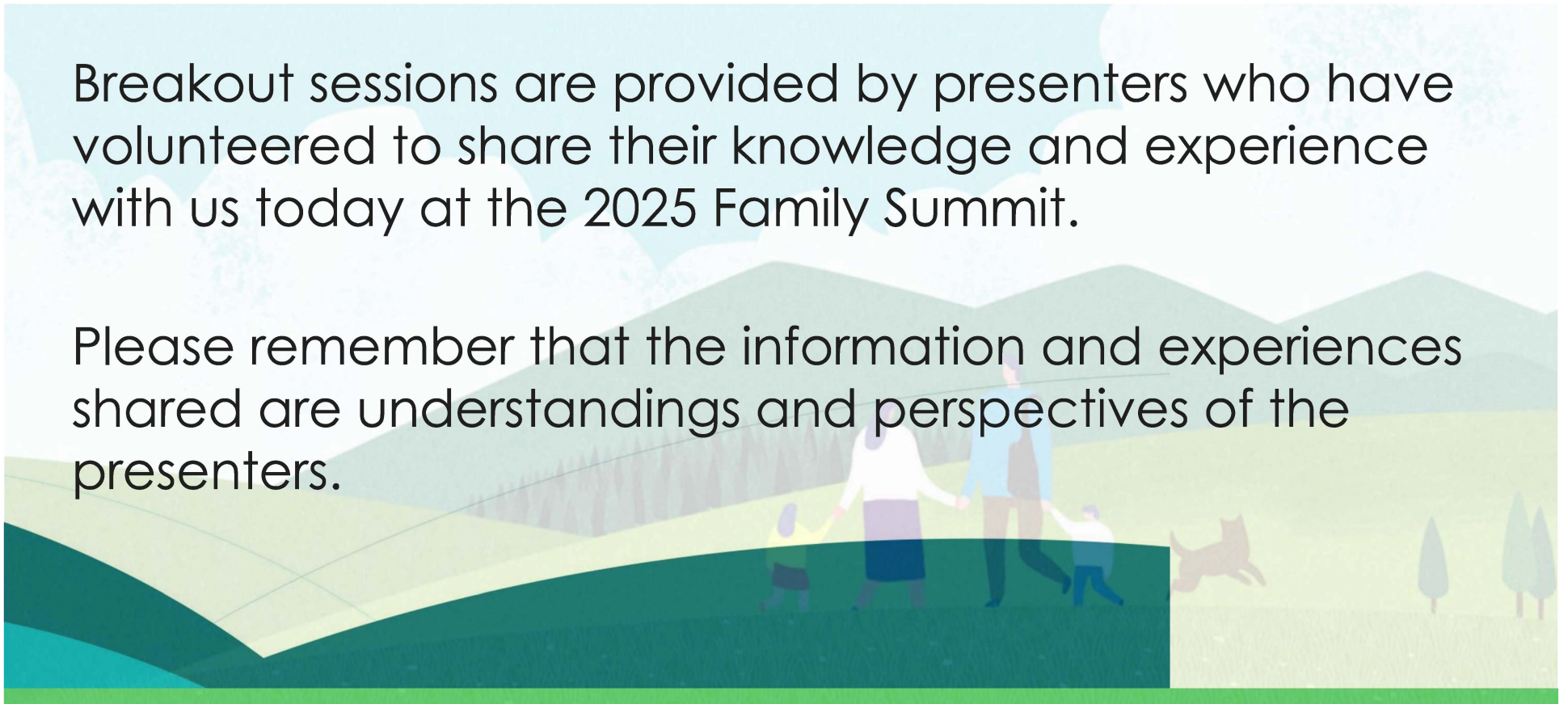
Offered by Sibshop Facilitators
(FCPS School Social Workers)



* Welcome *

Breakout sessions are provided by presenters who have volunteered to share their knowledge and experience with us today at the 2025 Family Summit.

Please remember that the information and experiences shared are understandings and perspectives of the presenters.



What Is Sibshops?

- ★ A program for typically developing children who have a sibling with a disability to share their experiences and develop community.
 - Participate in recreation and art activities to build social relationships
 - Engage in peer support conversations about their experiences having a sibling with a disability.



Sibshop Video



Sibshops in FCPS

7 years of Sibshops in FCPS

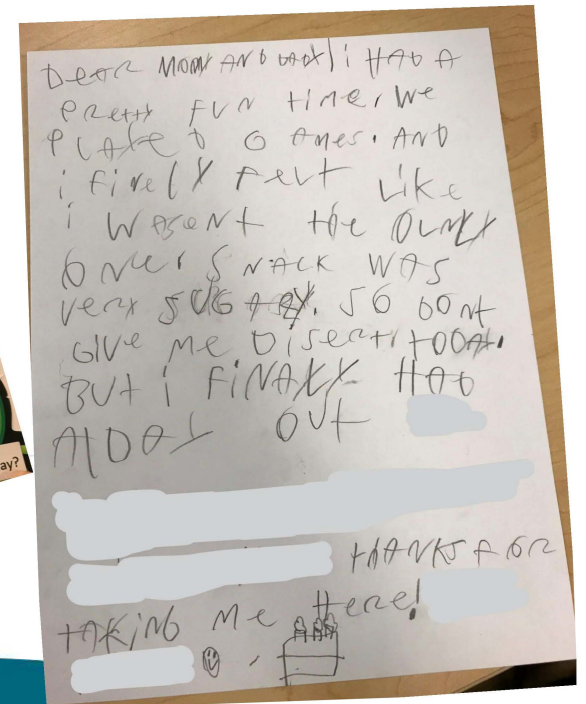
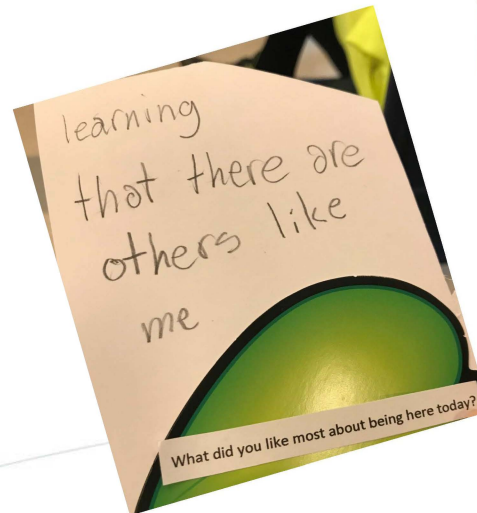
2 years of SibTeen in FCPS

4-6 Sibshops Sessions per year

1-3 SibTeen Sessions per year

77 Sibshops participants during the 2023-2024

20 repeating participants during the 23-24 school year



Discussion

What *strengths* do your typically developing children possess having siblings with unique support needs?



Strengths of typically developing siblings

- ★ Self-concept/ (self-identity)
- ★ Maturity
- ★ Tolerance and Patience
- ★ Advocacy
- ★ Pride
- ★ Insight
- ★ Humor
- ★ Vocation
- ★ Inspiration
- ★ Appreciation
- ★ Social Competence
- ★ Loyalty



Discussion

What unique *challenges* do your typically developing children possess having siblings with disabilities?



Unique Challenges of typically developing siblings

★ Anger and Frustration

★ Resentment

★ Fear

★ Isolation

★ Loss and Grief

★ Embarrassment

★ Confusion

★ Jealousy

★ Need for Information

★ Over-identification

★ Isolation

★ Increased Caregiving

★ Resentment

★ Guilt

★ Pressure to achieve

★ Future Concerns



Dear Aunt Blabby (*For Parents!*)

Dear Aunt Blabby,

I have a problem. My brother Michael has a disability. I hate to admit it, but sometimes he embarrasses me. Don't get me wrong - in a lot of ways Mike is a great guy. He can really do a lot for himself, even with all of his special needs. My problem is that I get embarrassed when he acts up in church or has a temper tantrum at the shopping mall. What can I do?

Signed, Embarrassed

Dear Aunt Blabby,

Maybe you can help me. I really like my sister. She has a lot of special needs, but I love her a lot. My problem is that I get bored just going for walks and watching TV with her. What is an activity that will be fun for both of us?

Signed, Curious



Ideas for Sibling Support

What are ways that you have found to support your typically developing child's unique challenges?



Tips for Support

- ★ Acknowledge siblings concerns and share age-appropriate information
- ★ Encourage good communication with typically developing children.
- ★ Right to a safe environment
- ★ Teach your sib the skills they may need to support their sibling and ones they can teach them to empower them (include coping strategies, but also things like sign language/using AAC device, conflict-resolution skills)



Protective Needs

- Try not to parentify the non-disabled sibling
- Set equal yet equitable expectations (of behavior and household contributions)



Social Needs

- Have family interests/activities and celebrations/milestones that don't revolve SOLELY around the other child's disability
- Make time for the siblings to connect with you (use open communication and active listening) and peers
 - Set aside special time with sibs.
 - Opportunities to meet other siblings



Care Needs

- ★ Be a model of resilience (children learn what they see!)
 - Signs of anxiety
- ★ Future care/concern for the sibling with a disability
 - Future planning by parents



Reflective Steps

- Learn more about life as a typically-developing sibling
- Remember, parent interpretation of their child's disability directly impacts sibling's interpretation of the same disability



Further Ideas for Support

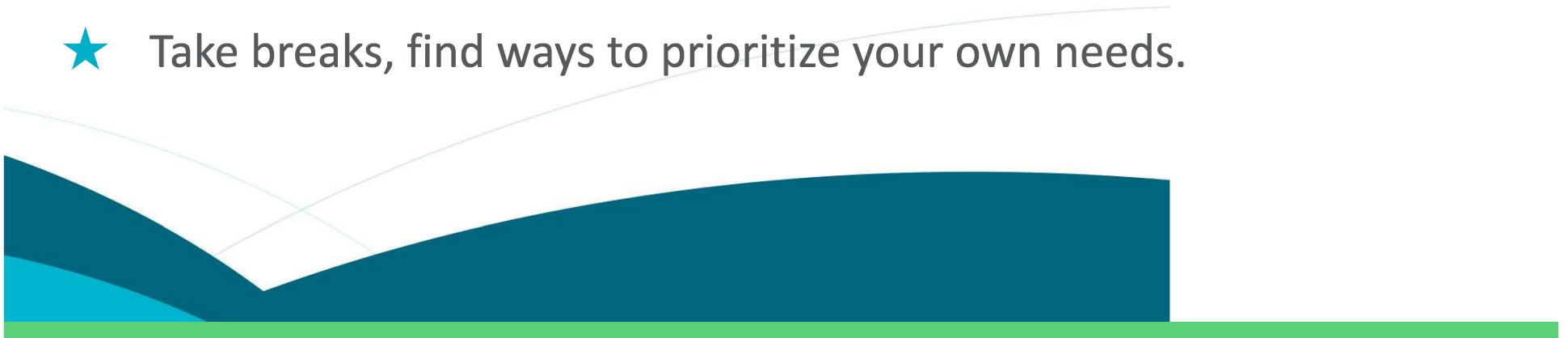
Follow this link for suggestions from adult siblings:

<https://siblingsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/How-To-Let-Young-Siblings-Know-You-Care-2021.pdf>



Self-care for Caregivers

- ★ Self-care for caregivers supports the entire well-being of the family.
- ★ Support from other caregivers, support groups, private therapy.
- ★ Take breaks, find ways to prioritize your own needs.



Discussion Opportunity

One strategy that you use to promote positive family dynamics?



Local Resources for supporting siblings

- ★ FCPS Family Resource Center:
<https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center>
 - FCPS Sibshops (registration via Family Resource Center)
- ★ FCPS Family Academy: <https://www.fcps.edu/family-academy>
- ★ Some support groups exist for specific needs.
 - Formed Families Forward for those in kinship care:
<https://formedfamiliesforward.org/services/peer-support-groups/>
 - NAMI VA's Youth Move Group:
<https://namivirginia.org/get-involved/youth-move-virginia/>



Additional Resources:

- ★ Sibshops: <https://siblingsupport.org/sibshops/>
- ★ Sibshops FAQ: <https://siblingsupport.org/sibshops/faqs-about-sibshops/>
- ★ Connect siblings online (for Teens and adults of siblings with disabilities): <https://siblingsupport.org/connect/>
- ★ Emily Holl from Sibling Support Project Presentation (2024) for FCPS Family Resource Center: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnvABBQ8tLg>



Additional Resources (cont.)

- ★ What Siblings Would Like Parents and Service Providers to Know:

<https://siblingsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/What-Siblings-Would-Like-Parents-and-Service-Providers-to-Know.pdf>

- ★ Spanish version:

<https://siblingsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/What-Siblings-Want-P-and-SP-to-Know-Spanish.pdf>



Books/Publications To Consider

For sibs:

- ★ *Rules* by Cynthia Lord
- ★ *Billy's Sister: Life when your sibling has a disability* by Jessica Leving
- ★ For adults:
- ★ *Thicker Than Water: Essays by Adult Siblings of People with Disabilities* by Don Meyer
- ★ *How to Be a Sister: A Love Story with a Twist of Autism* by Eileen Garvin

Other recommendations: <https://siblingsupport.org/publications/>



Q&A



THANK YOU!

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Thank You!

Please take a moment
to fill out this brief
feedback survey:

