

YOUNG SIBLINGS WORKSHOP

Age: Under 10 years old

Duration: 1 hour

For longer workshops, add more activities & make sure to include a 15-minute break!

Schedule

15 minutes: Icebreaker Activity

- Go around the room and have everyone say their name & favorite animal

5 minutes: Welcome

- Go over bathroom locations, confidentiality, respecting one another

15 minutes: Understanding Down Syndrome: *Reading a Story*

READING A STORY

Supplies Needed:

- A children's book that will prompt conversation about Down syndrome. There are many to choose from. Find your book by checking out www.woodbinehouse.com.

Lessons learned:

- Participants will get to know facts and experiences of Down syndrome
Facilitators should use this activity as an opportunity to teach brothers and sisters about Down syndrome, factually and from practical experience. Participants should use this activity to address some facts, feelings, and difficult moments about Down syndrome. Some important facts can be found in the "Activities for Older Participants" section of this site, specifically in the Jeopardy game. In our Topics sections, you can learn about commonly experienced feelings from brothers and sisters. Facilitators can also use this to begin discussions about brothers' and sisters' individual experiences of having a sibling with Down syndrome.

10 minutes: Sensitivity Game: Switch Hands

SWITCH HANDS

Supplies Needed:

- Depending on what version of this activity...
- Fork/spoon
- Writing utensil
- Ball to kick or throw

Lessons learned:

- Participants will gain understanding and empathy for their siblings
- The empathy gained here will promote understanding and patience for siblings

In this game, brothers and sisters will need to do various tasks using their non-dominant hand. These tasks can be eating, writing their names, throwing or kicking a ball, etc. This will help brothers and sisters to understand what some of their siblings may be experiencing.

10 minutes: Sensitivity Game: Dots-on-the-Back

DOTS-ON-THE-BACK

Supplies Needed:

- Stickers in groups
 - If you have 12 participants, 4 green stickers/princess stickers/etc., 4 red stickers/car stickers/etc., and 4 yellow stickers/monster stickers/etc.
- Index card with disability written on it
- Any extra things to create disability, i.e. blind fold to create blindness

Lessons learned:

- Participants will learn about other disabilities
- Participants will gain empathy for their siblings and others
- Participants will get to know one another, as their teamwork and communication is necessary to successfully complete this activity

In this game, leaders should take stickers of about three different colors that have stuck to them an index card with a certain inability written on it. The stickers and index cards will be put on brothers and sisters, and then they must assume their particular inability. Some examples are this are the

following: not being able to move, not being able to walk, not being able to talk, not being able to see or hear, etc. They must get in groups according to their matching stickers while also acting within their various disabilities as written on the index cards. This is a great game to help brothers and sisters understand what some of their siblings may be experiencing.

5 minutes: Closing Remarks

- Share with them *Benefits of Having a Sibling with Down Syndrome*
- Have them come up with their own list of benefits!

BENEFITS OF HAVING A SIBLING WITH DOWN SYNDROME

There is a long list of all the benefits of having a sibling with Down syndrome. Your sibling will show you things about the world and your life that you never would have learned except through them. We are a special group of people; I can promise you that. Things can be tough; there's no doubt about it. But your sibling will provide you with unconditional love and teachings about yourself and others. Siblings of people with Down syndrome listed the following things as just a few of the benefits they've gotten from being the sibling of someone with Down syndrome.

Some benefits that other siblings have come up with include:

- Someone to play with
- Best friend
- Loving
- Kind
- Caring
- Fun

KEEP IN MIND...

1. Acknowledge the range of feelings that siblings may bring to the workshop.
2. Say what they feel is common—others experience that, too.
3. Give them practical things to do to remedy the situation.

RESOURCES TO CHECK OUT

1. Read up on different Topics to prepare for any questions that may arise!
2. Look under Activities to download worksheets and explore different games.
3. Check out Dr. Skotko & Sue Levine's book *Fasten Your Seatbelt: A Crash Course on Down Syndrome for Brothers and Sisters* for more helpful information!