

YOUNG SIBLINGS WORKSHOP

Age: Under 10 years old

Duration: 4 hours

Schedule

15 minutes: Human BINGO

HUMAN BINGO

Supplies Needed:

- Copies of the BINGO sheet (at end of document) for each participant
- Writing utensil for each participant (a choice of a colored marker has always been popular)
- Small token reward as participants finish.
 - We would recommend against sugared rewards
 - Consider, instead, stickers, squish balls, light-up rings, etc.

Lessons learned:

- Participants will get to know each other, particularly names
- Participants will foster personal connections that can set the stage for more sharing later in the workshop

This is a great activity to have brothers and sisters do as they arrive. If you have very young participants, who don't read or write yet, you may want to provide some other games available for them to entertain themselves with.

For this activity, give brothers and sisters a “human bingo board” that has different facts people may have about themselves. Brothers and sisters can use this board and its questions to ask people things about themselves and get to know one another! When someone finds another person who has that fact true for themselves, they write their name on your paper, in that question’s square. You can give this to brothers and sisters as they’re coming in and play with everyone until you’re ready to begin your Workshop. Whoever gets all the blanks filled gets a prize!

For example, here are some human bingo questions:

“Has blue eyes” “Likes to sing in the shower” “Likes Italian food” “Likes baseball” “Can whistle”

As a participant, if I found someone who had blue eyes, they would sign their name on that square on my bingo board. Once I have a *different* name for each question, I win a prize!

5 minutes: Welcome

- Go over bathroom locations, confidentiality, respecting one another

20 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 clicking [here!](#)

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.

15 minutes: Similarities and Differences

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Supplies Needed:

- Depending on which variation of the activity you do, you may need paper to make snowflakes or different materials to make gingerbread people or snowmen.

Lessons learned:

- Participants discuss strengths and weaknesses of themselves and their sibling to learn that they are alike.

- Participants will get accurate answers to their questions about Down syndrome that may arise as participants discuss differences.

For similarities and differences activities, facilitators can use snowflakes, gingerbread people, snowmen, or something else, to create one snowflake, for example, that represents the brother or sister and another one that represents their sibling with Down syndrome. This will allow participants to visually see how they've created two things to have some similarities and some differences based upon how they see themselves to be similar and different to their sibling with Down syndrome. Also talk about the ways in which participants are similar and different to their siblings. For example, they may share the same hair or eye color, or they may have the same favorite TV show. They may have differences within their favorite sports, how fast they learn, and favorite teacher or subject in school. This will then prompt discussion about how the brother or sister, specifically, is similar or different to their sibling with Down syndrome, how everyone has similarities and differences, and how that is a good thing! They can discuss positive and negative qualities of themselves and their siblings, which may bring up some topics that we have addressed under our Topics section of the website.

10 minutes: BREAK

30 minutes: Disability Pictionary

DISABILITY Pictionary

Supplies Needed:

- Pictionary topic cards
- Paper

- Writing utensils

Age group: All ages, but should group similar age groups

Lessons Learned:

- Participants will learn people-first language
- Participants will learn empathy and understanding of other disabilities

Play a game of Pictionary disability-style by making all of the questions about disability! This is a great opportunity to practice teaching people-first language, too. To prepare, write the following words each on a separate index card:

- Chromosome
- Wheelchair
- Seeing eye dog (guide dog)
- Special Olympics
- Hearing aid
- Translocation Down syndrome chromosomes

Ask the group to divide into two teams. Alternate between teams, inviting one person up to be the illustrator. Show them one of the cards privately, and they then would have 60 seconds to draw without using any verbal cues. If their teammates are able to guess the word, then they would score one point.

At some point, a participant might blurt out a phrase that is not in People First language. Use this as an opportunity to take a mini-break to discuss the pdf below.

15 minutes: Feelings- Happy, Mad or Sad

FEELINGS-HAPPY, MAD OR SAD

Supplies Needed:

- Paper or stick puppets
- Writing utensils
- If younger group, have a "feelings board" that can be found here!

Age group: Under 10 years old

Lessons learned:

- Participants will find a new way of expressing and understanding their feelings about their sibling.
- Participants will have the opportunity to talk with other siblings, as well as the facilitator, about their feelings and find ways to help tough situations.

There are a few ways you can do this activity:

1. Help the participants fold a paper into three columns. At the top of each column, make a happy, sad, and mad face. Discuss with the participants when they feel happy, sad, or mad about their sibling with Down syndrome. Do the same for when the brother or sister thinks they make their sibling happy, mad, or sad.

2. Make stick puppets that each represent happy, sad, or mad emotion. Then, use these to help brothers and sisters express what makes them happy, sad, or mad that their sibling does. Do the same for when the brother or sister thinks they make their sibling happy, mad, or sad.

Reassure them that their feelings are normal and okay, using some resources as outlined in the Topics section. Provide some steps for brothers and sisters to take when they're feeling really mad or have a big problem with their sibling. They should always be encouraged to go to their parents and try to look at the situation differently. More specific steps can also be found in the Topics section of this site

45 minutes: MEAL BREAK

- Depending on the time of your 4-hour workshop, make sure to provide snacks, water or lunch

20 minutes: Difficult Moments

DIFFICULT MOMENTS

Supplies Needed:

- Paper bags
- Facial feature art pieces (googly eyes, etc.)
- Markers, crayons, etc.
- Popsicle sticks
- Other decorations!

Lessons learned:

- Participants explore negative experiences and feelings with their sibling.

- Participants learn it's okay to talk about the difficult moments that their siblings and they, themselves, may sometimes experience because of how they are acting.

While there are many good times, all sibling relationships have difficult moments. To better examine some of those times when your brother or sister can really make you angry, try making monsters! You can make paper bag puppets, or as in the photo above, you can have each child make a set of eyes and a mouth. Pre-cut the shapes and supply markers, crayons, etc., so that they can decorate. Add a Popsicle stick to the eyes and another to the mouth so they can be more easily held up to the face to use as a mask. Note the mouth can be held either with the smile or the frown. Have the children talk about when their sibling acts like a monster. Similarly, have the children say when they act like monsters to other family members!

10 minutes: Sensitivity Game: Can't keep up!

CAN'T KEEP UP

Supplies Needed:

- String, yarn

Lessons learned:

- Participants will gain empathy for their siblings and others, especially in regards to mobility needs.

In this game, leaders should tie string around participants' legs, so that their legs are tied loosely together. You may also pair up someone with their legs tied and someone without their legs tied. Have the person without their legs tied together walk at a normal pace so that the other participant can experience what it may be like to not be able to keep up with someone else

because of your body's physical needs and movement. Then participants can switch roles! Talk about how frustrating it might feel not to be able to keep up with someone walking normally.

10 minutes: BREAK

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.

15 minutes: Question Box

QUESTION BOX

Supplies Needed:

- Index cards
- Markers/pens
- Shoe box

Lessons learned:

- Participants will have the freedom to ask questions about Down syndrome and their sibling, specifically, that they may not normally ask
- Participants will get accurate answers to their questions about Down syndrome, learning good facts
- Participants will benefit from the discussion and requisite growth around a particular topic

The Question Box is a great activity that gives brothers and sisters the opportunity to anonymously write any questions they have about their sibling on an index card and drop it into a shoe box or bag positioned in the room. You may want to start with a time to write some questions down at the beginning of the Workshop and then follow up with some designated time throughout the rest of the Workshop. Brothers and sisters should also know that they can write questions throughout the Workshop, outside of the designated times, as well. It will be important to leave the index cards and pencils out for participants to use through the Workshop. At other times throughout the Workshop, assemble the brothers and sisters into a circle (different circles for each age group). Ask one of the participants to pull a question and read it out loud, and then you can ask for some advice from the other participants. Oftentimes, siblings can help each other and answer their own questions! Other times, you might need to jump in and offer some direction or reflections. Use these questions as opportunities to

talk about some larger topics that are important to brothers and sisters. Make sure you create a safe environment so that brothers and sisters feel safe to share their thoughts and ask any questions there that they may have.

15 minutes: Closing Remarks

- Share with them *Benefits of Having a Sibling with Down Syndrome*
- Have them come up with their own list of benefits!
- Go around the room and have participants share their favorite activity or topic

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.

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

HUMAN BINGO

Has blue eyes	Likes to sing in the shower	Was born in September	Likes Italian food	Likes baseball
Can name a U.S. state that begins with "C"	Can curl his/her tongue	Reads the newspaper in the morning	Has gone fishing	Prefers vanilla to chocolate
Likes winter better than summer	Likes bananas	Has a sister or brother with Down syndrome	Can whistle	Likes pepperoni pizza
Likes to watch scary movies	Likes to swim	Can wink	Is wearing brown shoes	Went to zoo last year
Is the oldest child in the family	Has a cat	Has visited another country	Plays soccer	Can count to ten in another language