

Siblings

Barnet Mencap

Valerie Lam-Children's Service Deputy Manager

Early Years SEN Conference Wednesday 24th January 2024



Barnet
mencap

Barnet Mencap

- ▶ We are a Barnet based learning disability charity which offers a variety of services to both children and adults.
- ▶ What our service offers to families
 - Parenting Project
 - Information, Advice and Guidance Service
 - Take a Break (Our Short Breaks Service)
 - Open Door- IAG and Activities (For families with a child under 5)
 - E-PATs Study

Things to remember

Relationships between sibling are complex in any family.

Relationships with siblings are life long and can change at different stages

Both children can learn from even difficult experiences

Siblings of children with special needs are often empathic, resilient, independent and have a unique view on the world

What are the common challenges?

Limited time and attention from parents

Confusion/anxiety about their sibling's disability

Worry about friends' reactions

Worry about upsetting parents if express negative feelings about sibling

Lack of sleep!

Top Tips

Be Kind to yourself- You have a lot on your plate.

Take a step back to look at the family- how do you communicate/interact/have fun etc

- ▶ Let siblings express themselves -even if what they are saying is difficult to hear.
- ▶ Don't need to always do things together. Both children need to develop their own interests and identity

Top Tips

Age appropriate information about their sibling's condition can help - talking, books, tv, meeting other siblings.

What do they really want from you. Might be different from what you think they want. Is there a way to make it happen?

Talk to school or nursery to make them aware of their challenges as a sibling



Support for Siblings

- Barnet Carer's Centre-Young Carers
- <https://barnetyoungcarers.org.uk/>
- SIBS -really useful website with information for parents, school and the sibling themselves
- <https://www.sibs.org.uk/>
- Cerebra- can borrow books from their library for free
- <https://cerebra.org.uk/>



Your Questions



Thank you!

▶ **How to get in touch with us**

Visit www.barnetmencap.org.uk to
download a referral form

Or call us on **0208 349 3842**

▶ Projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

