

Transcript: Don Meyer

A child with special needs can be hard on not only parents but siblings too. Coming up are new programmes that are helping those brothers and sisters connect and get the attention they also need. Having a child with special needs means an enormous investment of time and energy for parents so where does that leave the child's brother or sister? In Today's King Five children's health link, Jean Anderson gives us an exclusive look inside a programme designed just for those kids.

Don Meyer - We are going to Play Giant Knots.

JA - Kids at this workshop get wrapped up in fun. It's a chance for the 1st time that's all their own and a place to meet others who can relate. These kids all have siblings with special needs.

Children talking –“ I think he has Down syndrome”, “she has floating hyper syndrome”, “he has syndrome disabilities”, “she has autism and dysonia”.

DM - Who would like to pick the next time capsule?

JA - Don Meyers created Sibshops to acknowledge and respond to siblings unmet concerns.

DM - Isolation, feeling guilty, perhaps feeling guilty that they don't have the disability or that they have gotten angry with their brothers or sisters.

Child talking - A time when brothers or sisters caused problems with a friend.

JA - Here they can air annoyances.

Child talking - I try to go into my room and just take a deep breath and stuff.

JA - And they can have a chance to check in with adults who have brothers or sisters with special needs.

Comment - Makes me wonder if teenagers get more annoying or less annoying.

JA - The kids say it helps. Children - they know more from coming here, because people are talking about it.

D M- Going out to a restaurant with your brother or sister who has special needs.

JA -Don Meyers says these kids show maturity beyond their years and compassion,

DM - They can be fierce advocates for people who are somehow perceived as being different because they know the consequence of prejudice.

JA - He said many are already thinking ahead to the time when they will be making the care decisions. Arming them now with information and support benefits them and their brothers and sisters.

DM - We increase the chances that they will elect to remain lovingly involved in the lives of their sibs when their mums and dads are no longer around.

JA - There are more than 200 Sibshops around the country modelled after the one at Seattle Children's hospital. For King Five Children's Health Link, I'm JA.

Many community agencies can also sponsor Sibshops. Kids can connect through an online sibling support network. If you would like to find out more, click on our website at kingfive.com.