

# talking to SIBLINGS

It is important to talk to your child about his/her sibling's disability.  
Be reassuring and comforting, and stick to simple language that your child can understand.

**Preschoolers** - need to know they cannot "catch" their sibling's disability and they did not cause the condition.

**School Age** - need to have information and answers to specific questions posed by themselves or peers.

**Teenagers** - often have specific questions about their sibling's needs that they need to have answered.

## ENCOURAGE

- your child to talk about their feelings; let them know it's okay to feel the way they do;
- questions and answer them honestly in a way that your child understands.

## SHARE

- with your child about the condition - if siblings are not informed about the condition they make up their own hypotheses as to what is happening to their brother/sister;
- information about the family situation with teachers, child care staff and others so that they can be sensitive to the sibling's needs.

## CONNECT

- your child with other groups/peers who have siblings with extra support needs.

## INCLUDE

- siblings in visits with service providers;
- written materials suitable for the sibling's development level to help them attain an understanding of what is happening to their sibling.

## DISCUSS

- how other people might react to their sibling, and how that might make them feel;
- the future - let your child know what is likely to happen to their sibling, themselves and the family, staying positive and realistic.

