

## Sibling Research

The following states have sibling bill of rights: Vermont, Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Arizona and North Carolina.

The New Jersey Foster Child bill of rights specifically has a section addressing sibling placement and contact.

The following states have post adoption contact legislation for children/youth who have been placed separate from their siblings: Arkansas, Florida, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New York, Texas, and Illinois (but only if they are placed with relatives).

Minnesota, Idaho and Nebraska have specific legislation regarding efforts to place siblings together and the burden of proof regarding the agencies efforts.

Benefits of sibling placement:

- Enhance sense of safety & well-being
- Provide natural & mutual support
- Shared history
- Continuity
- Sense of family, comfort and familiarity in a strange place
- Higher levels of social supports as adults, higher self-esteem and income as adults
- Fewer foster care disruptions
- Increase likelihood of achieving permanency
- Sibling rivalry/fighting helps siblings teaches siblings to work through conflict
- Children with special needs have the same needs around sibling relationships as all other children.
- Sibling affection and attachment lower trauma symptoms
- More positive dealings with peers, fewer emotional and behavioral problems, better school performance
- Long lasting relationship in most people's lives, outlives parents, begins before spouses/life partners and children.

Only 3 out of 100 children are dangerously physically, emotionally, or sexually violent to their siblings. Some of the signs of this include: power differential; one sibling regularly avoiding the other sibling(s); child acting out abuse in play; roles between siblings are rigid, one is always the victim, the other is always the aggressor; violence increases over time; and one child being fearful of their sibling.

Often attachment to adults is looked at as more important than attachment to one's siblings, simply because adults can provide caregiving whereas siblings can't always offer this.

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