

SIBLINGS AUSTRALIA

The Sibling Project, established in the Department of Psychological Medicine in 1999 to develop and co-ordinate services for siblings, has now expanded into a national incorporated organisation, Siblings Australia. The Director, Kate Strohm is author of *Siblings: Brothers and Sisters of Children with Special Needs* (published by Wakefield Press and available from the WCH Health Information Centre). Kate has been conducting workshops around Australia for service providers and parents, and there is a good groundswell of interest in supporting siblings. Providers (including doctors, nurses, allied health staff) can play an important role in recognising and addressing the needs of siblings (see Bulletin: Siblings of disabled/ill children).

Research from the US (citation below) suggests that siblings are, in fact, at greater risk for negative physical health as well. The article concludes, *"Even if a child is without a disability but has a sibling with a disability, he/she experiences an increased likelihood of lower health status, unmet need for medical care, and bed days sick. Indeed the health impact of living with a sibling with a disability is greater than the impact of being poor, and similar to the impact of belonging to an ethnic minority group."*

Siblings Australia's website, www.siblingsaustralia.org.au has a range of resources and also hosts discussion groups for siblings (both adults and children). You can download the latest reports and read about the development of Siblings Australia.

Hogan, D., Park, J., & Goldscheider, F. (2003). Using Survey Data to Study Disability: Results From the National Health Interview Survey on Disability. *Research in Social Science and Disability*, 3, 185-205.