

Sibling placement, contact, and connection in Tasmania

Consistent and meaningful connection and contact with siblings provides links to family, community, and culture, and supports good mental health and wellbeing.

CREATE asked 24 young people with a care experience aged 12 - 18 in Tasmania about sibling contact and their experiences staying connected when living apart.

88%
of young people
rated connection
with their siblings as
important.

Most
young people were
happy with the current
amount of contact with
their siblings:
42%
wanted more.

Practical support
and encouragement
to maintain contact
with their siblings was
valued by young
people.

42%
of young people
did not live with
any of their
siblings.



Family means a lot to me. I have a strong connection with my family. I like to stay in contact, so I know how my little brother is coping and make sure he is OK.
(Female, 12 years)

It's good to have a brother to do things with, to go outside and play. I think it's good to have someone to talk to. (Male, 14 years)

I don't really see them and don't really have a relationship. (Male, 14 years)



Key Messages

Most young people said that sibling connection was important to them. It was important because:

- it helped them maintain their family connection;
- they could support each other; and
- it made them happy and gave them a sense of belonging.

“ They [siblings] are your flesh and blood and the only ones that really get it. It makes you feel better and more whole, you don't feel left out and different, like it's not just you all alone. (Female, 18 years)

Overall, young people found carers were more supportive of sibling contact than caseworkers. While some commented about practical support caseworkers had provided, 39% said caseworkers were not at all supportive.

“ She [carer] encouraged me to keep in touch and told me it is good for me to talk to my siblings. She made sure I didn't have any appointments on the days I was going to meet with my sibling. (Female, 13 years)

Not sure how supportive they've [caseworkers] been because I haven't been involved in the decision making around it. (Female, 12 years)

While most young people reported having some say about contact with their siblings, fewer felt they had a say about co-placement.

Actions

- Ensure siblings are placed together whenever possible.
- Ensure regular, meaningful, and ongoing contact and connections between siblings are maintained and supported when siblings cannot be placed together.
- Ensure young people are supported to meaningfully participate in decision-making about sibling placement, contact, and connection.
- Recognise the importance of sibling relationships within relevant policies and legislation, including definitions of "sibling" that account for cultural context and differences.

Contact CREATE to get a copy of the full report.
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