

Siblings in foster care may also look to each other as a unique source of support and help.

- Child Welfare Information Gateway, *Sibling Issues in Foster care and Adoption* (2019). Washington, DC: U.S. Dep't of Health and Human Servs, Admin. for Children & Families, Children's Bureau, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/siblingissues.pdf>

This publication discusses how child welfare professionals can positively affect the wellbeing foster care children by enabling them to maintain connections with their siblings. The authors discuss the importance of sibling relationships, the benefits of placing siblings together, and best practices for keeping them together. In terms of benefits, they note that “[s]ibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity throughout a child’s lifetime and can be the longest relationships that most people experience.” *Id.* at 2. Additionally, they highlight that “preserving ties with siblings . . . can help buffer children from the negative effects of maltreatment and removal from the home.” *Id.* The benefits of sibling support can extend past the time children exit the foster care system and can include “emotional and spiritual support, guidance about college or other opportunities, assistance required due to physical and developmental disabilities, and information about health concerns or history.” *Id.* (internal citations omitted).

- Adam McCormick, *Siblings in Foster Care: An Overview of Research, Policy, and Practice*, 4 J. of Pub. Child Welfare 198 (2010), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15548731003799662?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

This article reviews empirical data on siblings in foster care and provides an overview of the policies and practices related to sibling placements in the child welfare system. With respect to the unique support provided by siblings in these environments, the author notes: “Research suggests that the sibling relationship plays a significant role in the lives of children and continues to serve as a source of support and comfort into adulthood. In addition, the sibling relationship can be of even greater significance when children face the unfortunate circumstances of abuse, neglect, and separation from their parents. The sibling relationship is oftentimes the longest lifetime relationship for a person with siblings. In the case of many foster youth, siblings are not only the final remaining family members to lean on for support and comfort, but also the only link to the past.” *Id.* at 213. In conclusion, the author urges welfare professionals to “work towards preserving the only family relationship that many youth in foster care have”—*i.e.*, their sibling relationships. *Id.* at 215.