



Generations & Conversations

A Sibling Journey

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Conversations

- ▶ Our story
- ▶ What the research says
- ▶ Suggested conversations to have with your family



Siblings provide the most long-lasting relationships for their sibling with an intellectual/developmental disability

Rossiter and Sharpe, 2001



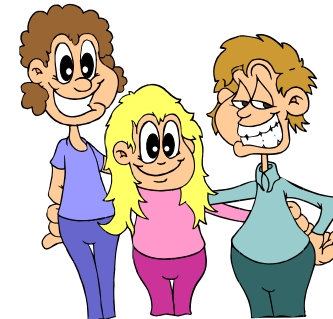
Experts say:

**In childhood sibling
relationships tend to be close
and positive.**



Quality of sibling relationships & level of involvement depend on:

- 1. Childhood experience**
- 2. Gender**
- 3. Relative ages**
- 4. Proximity**



Our Family Influences Us Throughout Life

Biology: Likes, dislikes, skills, abilities

Social: Family and friend network, connection with community members

Environment: Neighborhood, socio-economic, education

Policy: Dreams, aspirations, house rules, cultural rules, expectations





Second Conversation

Disability is normal, but the
challenges are real

Considerations

- Advocate for your sibling, but remember to advocate for yourself.
- Find ways to de-stress
- It's healthy to have separate lives
- Demand and seek support!



Third Conversation

Lessons from my children...



**What do the experts say about
building relationships?**



**Including each other is important
to building relationships**

Typical siblings want:



- To feel safe and secure
- To get special attention
- To feel approval
- Information about their sibling's disability
- To know someone understands their feelings



Siblings with disabilities want:

- The right to make choices and mistakes
- To feel valued and respected by family
- Power to disagree with their siblings
- Power to disagree with their parents
- To have a life of their own
- To have a say about the support they get
- To be included





**Most non-disabled brothers
and sisters turn-out just fine!**



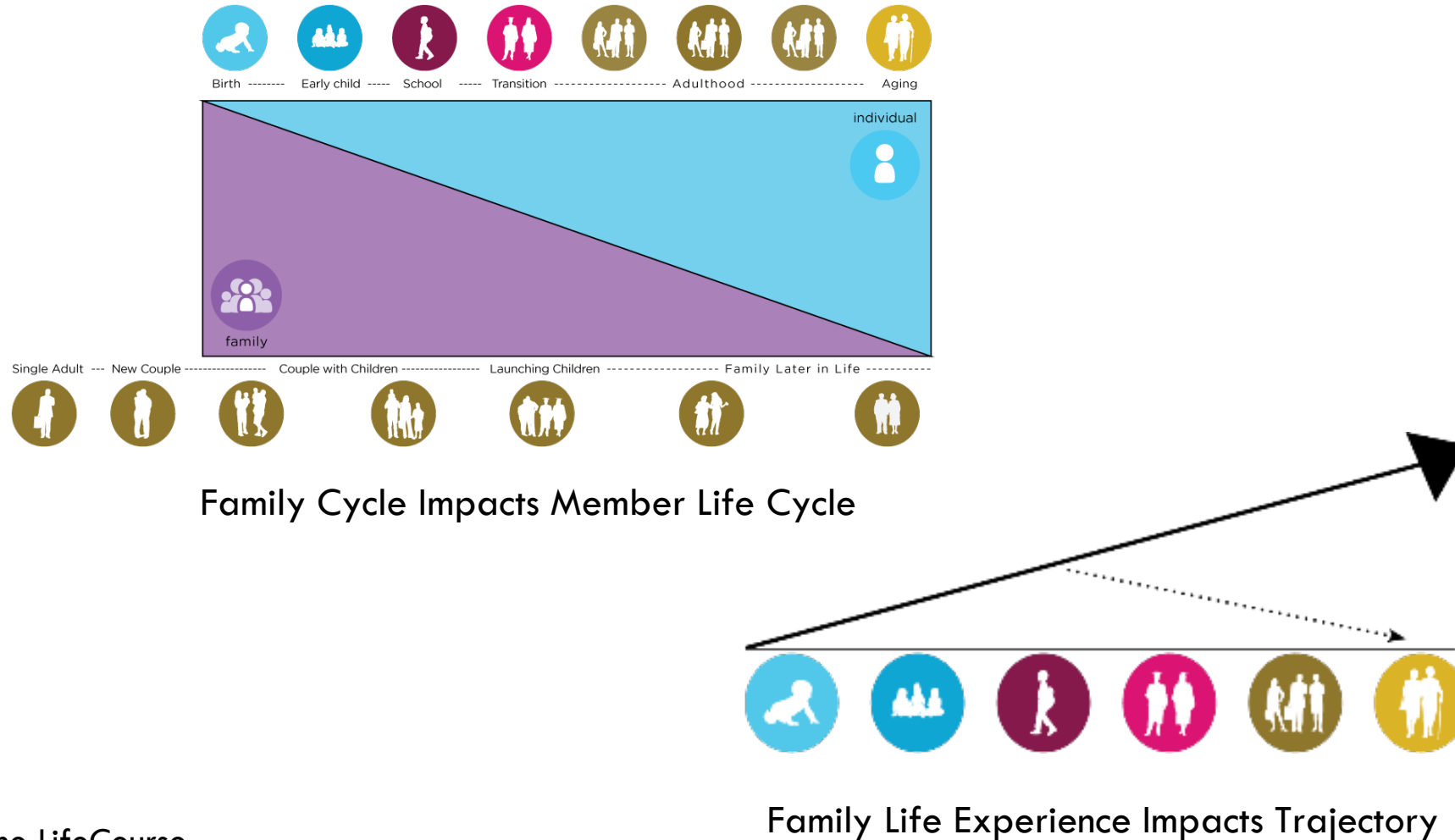
**Recognize individual gifts
and celebrate them!!**



Fourth Conversation

As our parents age...

The life cycle of the family, impacts each member



Charting the LifeCourse

Family Life Experience Impacts Trajectory



When my parents were 73

**“Mom, I want my own
apartment
when I’m 35”**



Advocating Against the Tide





Keep the conversation going.....





Fifth Conversation
As My Sister and I Age



Life Planning for my family while
Planning for my sister's life without me.



Siblings with disabilities teach their brothers and sisters some important lessons.

Thank You!!