

What do I do if I have siblings?



Sibling Policy

In 2001, youth in care met with the Office of Child and Family Services Director, to express their concerns about how often siblings (brothers and sisters) become separated in the foster care system. The Director asked them to help develop the first ever DHHS policy for siblings in care. They did, and it became policy in 2002! Some of the guidelines in the policy include:

- Respecting the importance of sibling relationship
- Making placement of siblings together a priority and making sure that each child gets to express their opinion about this
- Placing siblings near one another when they cannot live together
- Maintaining contact between siblings through visitations, phone contact, letter writing, and e-mail

These guidelines apply to preparing a child to be adopted, too.

Sibling Visitation Law

In 2005, YLAT member Kala Clark, succeeded in getting sibling visitation legislation passed. The law allows judges to order sibling visitation when one child comes into foster care and another remains at home, requires DHHS to work hard to make sure that siblings can visit when one has been adopted, and allows a child's wishes for sibling visits to be included in court hearings. You can find the law at this website link - www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/22/title22sec4068.html.

Camp To Belong Maine

Camp To Belong Maine (CTBM) is an organization that connects and reunites siblings who have been separated because of foster care or other out-of-home care. CTBM has been hosted at Camp Wigwam in Waterford, Maine since 2004. Check out www.campbelong.org to see what is going on!

Maine Youth in Care Bill of Rights

YLAT members created a Bill of Rights for youth in care in 2009. It identifies rights of siblings. YLAT members created a bill of rights for youth in care in 2009. In 2012 YLAT enacted a sibling bill of rights and in 2016 a normalcy bill of rights. You can find these documents at www.ylat.org/rights-resources/youth-rights/.

Maine State Adoption Reunion Registry

The Maine Adoption Reunion Registry assists siblings, parents, grandparents or other relatives separated by adoption when they both want to be in contact with one another. For more information call Vital Records: (207) 287-3181



“Siblings can bring support to each other, especially during trauma.”

Kala C., age 15