Linking lives for siblings living separately in out-of-home care

A practical tool for caseworkers to promote sibling connections

According to the Social Convoy Model, individuals travel through life within a network of relationships that offer social support. These are relationships that accompany the child over their life cycle.

The concept of "linked lives" highlights that individuals' life-course trajectories do not evolve in isolation, but are linked to others through their relationships, obligations and exchanges with important others such as parents and siblings. These links, once lost, are difficult to reconnect later in life, increasing the risk of isolation and loneliness.

If we think of children’s relationships as a convoy, it captures how their relationships are both protective and dynamic in nature. Having a strong social convoy helps people of all ages cope with major life transitions and is linked to improvements in overall wellbeing over the lifespan.

For more information contact: Research Centre for Children and Families, Sydney School of Education and Social Work

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Developed as part of the ARC Linkage project Fostering Lifelong Connections for Children in Permanent Care (LP180101332)
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Relationships with siblings can be among the most important and long-lasting. Build sibling connections through opportunities to make and share memories:

- Encouraging shared interests/recreational activities (e.g. sport, movies)
- Organising sleepovers and spending school holidays together
- Communicating through video calls, text messages, social media, online gaming, emails and letters
- Celebrating special occasions together (e.g. birthdays, Diwali, Christmas)
- Sharing cultural activities (e.g. language, foods, celebrating cultural days of significance)
- Spending time on Country for Aboriginal children

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