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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 5, 2015**

## **ECLC of New Jersey is Hosting a Free Parent Workshop on How to Support the Siblings of Children with Special Needs**

**CHATHAM** – At ECLC of New Jersey’s school in Chatham for children with special needs, a number of younger staff members were inspired to enter the field because of their sibling with a disability.

These wonderfully positive outcomes, and there are many others to name, are an offshoot of growing up in a family with a sibling who has special needs. It’s no different than going into finance, if your mom is an accountant. But, for the brothers and sisters of a person with a disability, there are special challenges to face that may continue for a lifetime.

On Thursday, May 14, at 7 p.m., the ECLC school in Chatham at 21 Lum Avenue, will co-host a free parent workshop on the topic of managing those differences within a family. This workshop is open to all parents of children with special needs of any age. Parents will get firsthand advice they can take home from adult siblings with experience.

This interactive workshop is co-hosted by ECLC and SIBS NJ (Supportive Initiatives for Brothers & Sisters), a non-profit dedicated to providing the siblings of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and mental health conditions with information and support.

SIBS NJ was founded by two sisters who have a sister diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Growing up, they were lucky to have each other, but they didn’t have the opportunity to meet and connect

with other siblings until later on in life. They have faced many challenges, as well as great experiences, due to having a sister with autism.

The sisters decided to do something to help other sibs who were going through similar experiences. Last year, they founded SIBS NJ as a nonprofit to help siblings connect with one another and offer them resources to help them and their siblings with disabilities live full, rich and meaningful lives.

This workshop is part of a series for parents on topics that are particularly important to parents of children with special needs. As a service to the community, all ECLC workshops are free and open to anyone. Walk-ins are welcome, but it is helpful to register in advance. Please contact Allison Weideman, [aweideman@eclcofnj.org](mailto:aweideman@eclcofnj.org), or 973-635-1700 to reserve a spot.

### **About ECLC**

Established in 1970, ECLC of New Jersey is an accredited, nonprofit offering “Education, Careers and Lifelong Community” to children and adults with special needs, including those diagnosed with autism, Down syndrome and severe learning and/or language disabilities. ECLC runs schools in Chatham and Ho-Ho-Kus educating some 300 students, from ages 5-21. ECLC graduates can enter the P.R.I.D.E. adult centers in Florham Park or Paramus, or get find a job in their community through ECLC’s employment affiliate, Community Personnel Services, based in Chatham. Learn more about ECLC at [www.eclcofnj.org](http://www.eclcofnj.org).