

**Module: Assessment of Infants and Toddlers With
Visual Impairments**

**Session 1: Legal Basis and Overview of
Recommended Practices**

**Handout C: Collaboration Among Families, Early Intervention
Programs, and Specialty Providers**

Low Incidence Committee of the Massachusetts Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council. (2004). *Collaboration among families, early intervention programs, and specialty providers* (Appendix A, pp. 9-10). Unpublished document.

Goal: convey to family that *all* providers are contributing to a comprehensive service plan for the child and family

- Avoid adding to the family's stress
- Avoid adding to the provider's stress

Principles:

1. Speak respectfully about other providers.

- Do not disparage other programs or techniques even if you do not agree with their approach—use neutral language in any discussion.
- Highlight the fact that there are different ways to teach any one skill, that you use one way; other programs use others. There are even other strategies that might be used.
- Avoid getting pulled into discussions with families about other providers. Encourage the family to contact the supervisor in the other program with their concerns.

2. If the family or provider has concerns about what a staff person from another program is doing,

- Share your concern with your supervisor, who will decide if the concern warrants contacting the other staff person's supervisor.
- Do not share your concern with the family—supervisors have a communication system among agencies that should be utilized.
- Refer families to the other agency's provider and/or supervisor when they raise concerns.

3. Scheduling of sessions should not be a competitive process.

- Scheduling conflicts should be addressed by program supervisors.
- Requests for changes in schedules should be addressed to supervisors.
- Do not encourage a parent to cancel another provider's scheduled appointment to accommodate your availability.

4. Programs should be open about sharing their goals and techniques.

- Avoid contributing to the dynamic that any one program knows best and should dictate what a child needs.
- Set up a protocol for getting staff together to review goals—child specific data should be used in decision making.
- When families ask questions about another program's goals and techniques, refer them to the provider and/or supervisor of the other program.

5. Specialty service providers should

- Confer with service coordinator when specialized services begin and discuss planned service intensity so it can be incorporated in IFSP.
- Confer with early intervention service coordinator about any changes in the service plan (these need to be incorporated in the IFSP).
- Offer to participate in future assessments, IFSP reviews, and transition planning.