

Module: **Family-Centered Practices
for Infants and Toddlers With Visual Impairments**

Session 1: Building Reliable Alliances

Activity B: Legislation Project

Instructor Guidelines

The purpose of this activity is for participants to describe to families what early intervention is, including their rights and responsibilities by law.

Time needed. 15 minutes to explain assignment to the participants and 10–15 minutes for each small group presentation

Instructor guidelines. This project is designed to make the law “come alive.” The instructor should provide an introduction to the Part C legislation, using the PowerPoint presentation provided. Faculty should be prepared for considerable variation in terms of information on how the law is being implemented in the local community. This will help participants realize that they have the chance to be “street level bureaucrats” in that local interpretations vary quite a bit, and they have more power than they might think in influencing local policy and practices.

Objectives. The objectives of this activity are threefold: (1) to develop participants’ skills and knowledge about strategies (including electronic technology) for finding information on topics such as legislation; (2) to introduce participants to information on Part C of IDEA; and (3) to develop participants’ understanding of how legislation and regulations directly influence their day-to-day work with children and families.

Format. Participants’ assignment is to learn about Part C of IDEA. One component of the project requires individual effort, and another component of the project will be implemented by a small group. Participants will individually conduct research. In small groups, they will ensure the accuracy of the information, prepare a written summary, and make an oral presentation to the class on some aspect of Part C. In groups, participants will decide how to share equitably the responsibilities and tasks of this assignment so everyone learns and benefits.

Directions

A. Individuals research Part C of IDEA. Individuals can gather information using a variety of methods including interviews, library searches, document analysis, and internet technology. Determine what the federal legislation says about each of the questions below and how the legislation is being interpreted in the local community.

In this research, answer the questions listed below.

- Who is eligible for Part C services?
- Who provides the services and how do these individuals work together? Specifically address potential roles of specialists who work with children with visual impairments.
- How are children's and families' rights protected and guaranteed?
- What is service coordination and how does it work?
- Describe any other aspects of the legislation that seem particularly helpful.

B. Ensuring the accuracy of the findings. Individuals should bring their written answers to the above questions to their small group meeting in class on and compare their findings. Participants should bring source information so that discrepancies can be checked with original sources.

C. In-class presentation. Each group will be assigned one of the above questions to present in class. Participants should plan a brief, engaging presentation about their question to educate the rest of the class. Groups should pretend they are presenting to a parent group. Each group will have a maximum of five minutes for these presentations. The information described below should be included in the presentation.

- The group's perceptions of the best method of securing information on legislation (Web, printed materials from a particular agency, talking with individuals, etc.). Consider this situation and address it in the presentation: A parent has asked you how to find out about legislation and his/her rights related to special services and programs. How would you advise that parent?
- A concrete example of how this law is making an impact on a particular program or a particular child and family you know
- Cultural values or assumptions underlying this law

D. In addition, each group should complete an accurate written summary of the information they present for distribution to the class. This should include information sources.

Resources to help you

1. Web sites compiled by Linda Rowley of the Family Village at <http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/websites.html>
2. IDEA Project <http://www.ideapractices.org>
3. Supplemental reading: Kalyanpur, M., & Harry, B. (1999a). Legal and epistemological underpinnings of the construction of disability. In M. Kalyanpur & B. Harry (Eds.), *Culture in special education* (pp. 15-45). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.