

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

Session 1: Building Reliable Alliances

Activity C: Family Philosophy Project

Instructor Guidelines

The purpose of this activity is for participants to develop their own philosophy statement about family-centered care and intervention, based on listening to parents, readings, feedback from instructor and peers, and course activities.

Time needed. 15 minutes to introduce the activity to participants; 10 minutes at the end of each class for participants to revise their draft statement; 30–45 minutes, depending upon the number of participants, to share their final philosophy statement with the class

This project is designed to promote critical thinking skills as well as to produce a concrete product that participants can use in their professional careers. Upon entering the workforce, former students and participants have hung their philosophy statements in their offices, used them as part of their professional résumés, and created an informational handout for families about themselves that includes the philosophy statement.

It is critical that faculty follow the guidelines below to facilitate the success of this project.

- *Provide a clear introduction about the purpose and the evolving nature of this assignment.*
- *Share some examples of other participants' philosophy statements, if available.*
- *Insist that the draft statements be brought to class each time and provide a brief amount of time at the end of each class for participants to work on their statements.*
- *Build in time for participants to share philosophy statements in class (in small groups or with a partner) so they can get feedback.*
- *Encourage participants to share their draft with families, if they are involved in a family practicum or mentor project.*
- *Have a date when a draft is due for faculty feedback.*

Participant outcome. Participants will be able to describe to a parent their overall philosophy for working with families, including the basic assumptions and principles that guide their approach.

Format. This is an ongoing project that will culminate in participants having a unique statement of principles or assumptions that will guide their work with children and

families. Participants will begin this project during the first class session. The project will conclude with a copy of participant's philosophy statement.

The philosophy statement will be developed, refined, revised, and shaped as a result of the readings, discussions, presentations, and reflections completed throughout the course. **Participants should bring their evolving philosophy statement to all classes.** Because of the evolving nature of each participant's philosophy statement, participants will share their draft statement with the changes, additions, and draft comments.

In addition to the philosophy statement, participants should include a reflection on challenges observed in the field that make it difficult to engage in family-centered practices. These reflections should incorporate their philosophical beliefs. Participants may also chose to include "pockets of excellence" or exemplary programs or individuals that they feel reflect their philosophical beliefs about working with families. This information will be shared in the form of a reflection paper due.

Final Products. The final version of the philosophy statement should be rendered in a format that would be suitable for framing or mounting on an office wall in a future workplace. The reflection paper should be brief (one page) and typed.