

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

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**Session 1: Building Reliable Alliances**

**Activity F: Family Beliefs, Values, and Symbols**

**Instructor Guidelines**

The purpose of this activity is for participants to

- be aware of their comfort level when discussing information about their own families,
- develop an awareness of others' comfort level when they are asked to discuss information about their families, and
- increase awareness of the importance of diversity in family values.

**Time needed.** 40 minutes

Begin this activity by sharing your own family symbol with the class. Ask for a show of hands from those participants who are willing to share their symbol in a small group or with the entire class. Groups of three or four can be formed around those willing to share. (Once participants are in a group, everyone usually feels comfortable sharing their symbol.) Participants meet in small groups for 15 to 20 minutes. Participants reconvene in a large group where participants are asked to discuss the questions listed below.

- How did it feel to share something personal about your family?
- Did you feel comfortable doing this?
- Was the symbol an effective way to share personal information?
- If so, what was effective about it?
- If your family were in early intervention, what kind of information would you want an early interventionist to know, and how would you want them to secure this information?

These questions can lead to a discussion about the

- realization that it takes time to build trust with families.
- importance of letting families share information about themselves in ways that give them some control. Asking families predetermined questions does not give them as much control as does asking them open-ended questions or letting them reveal information over time and in ways that they choose.

- range of preferences, values, and beliefs about information sharing that exist among the participants. This same range may be present in families with whom they work.

**Participant guidelines**

1. Please bring to class something significant (e.g., a picture, toy, shell) that is symbolic of your family.
2. Think of your family in any way that you like (e.g., family by birth, marriage, life partners, extended family, or friends that serve as family).
3. Be prepared to share briefly with a small group (2 to 3 minutes), if you choose to do so, the significance of the symbol you have chosen.