

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

Session 1: Building Reliable Alliances

Activity H: Vignette

Participant Guidelines

The purpose of this activity is to apply the ideas in the readings, discussions, and activities to a real-life situation.

Directions. Read the vignette and write down your response to the question below.

Vignette

A family arrived from El Salvador with an 18-month-old son who is visually impaired and developmentally delayed. The family lived in a one-room, dirt-floored garage in Los Angeles. The garage had one overhead light bulb, but no running water or cooking facilities. They have very little furniture, bedding, or clothing. They arrived only with what they could carry.

The family learned about a local early intervention program through the church they joined. The family speaks only Spanish. With the help of a translator from the church, they completed the process and paperwork to enroll their son in an early intervention program. They had never seen a program like this before. In El Salvador, they had received no special services for their son. They were especially pleased to meet other parents of children with visual impairments and to learn what their new country had to offer their son.

The son was enrolled in the program, and initially the mother, father, and child came to each biweekly, center-based session. The teacher made weekly home visits. As a result of the home visits, the staff of the early intervention program became very concerned about the family's living conditions. They began bringing the family such things as furniture, clothes, bedding, and extra food. They also began to explore how to get the family onto a priority list for publicly funded housing. They were committed to helping this family have a better physical existence.

Gradually, the father began to come less frequently to the biweekly session. Within 3 months, the mother and child were also not on the bus when it arrived at the program. The family continued to be present for their scheduled weekly home visit. At about 4 months, the child's teacher went out to make a home visit at the regularly scheduled

time and no one was home. She continued to stop by the house for the next 2 weeks when she was visiting other families in the area. She persisted because she had a sense that the family's decision to discontinue the program was not related to receiving services for their son.

Adapted from Vincent, L.J. (1992). Families and early intervention: Diversity and competence. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 16(5), 166-172.

What do you think contributed to the family's decision to discontinue services?