

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

Session 1: Building Reliable Alliances

Study Questions and Answers for Recommended Reading B: Chen, McLean, Corso, & Bruns

Chen, D., McLean, M., Corso, R., & Bruns, D. (2001). *Working together in EI: Cultural considerations in helping relationships and service utilization* (Tech. Rep. No. 11). University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Early Childhood Research Institute on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services. Retrieved December 7, 2001, from <http://clas.uiuc.edu/techreport/tech11.html>

1. The shift from a professional-centered service delivery model in early intervention to a more family-centered model is gradual and ongoing. Why is this so, and what are the implications for early intervention (EI) professionals, administrators, and personnel trainers?
 - **Programs vary in their definition, interpretations, and implementation of family-centered services.**
 - **Changes in demographics of young children and families receiving EI services**
 - **Changes in numbers of families from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds**
 - **Introduction of new service approaches to EI**
 - **EI personnel must learn new ways for service delivery that are culturally and linguistically sensitive.**
2. The authors point out two important factors to keep in mind in helping relationships between families and professionals. What are they?
 - **EI professionals should fill the role of a help-giver and information provider to families and their children rather than that of an impersonal agency representative.**
 - **Families with similar cultural backgrounds may not necessarily benefit from similar EI interventions.**
3. Five attributes that facilitate the development of helping relationships between EI professionals and families and that empower families were described. What are they?
 - **Interacting with families in a positive, proactive, and respectful way**
 - **Having confidence in families' abilities to identify their needs, goals, and necessary supports**

- **Providing opportunities for families to develop competencies**
 - **Sharing information so families can make informed decisions**
 - **Recognizing cultural differences and value differences**
4. Both families' and EI professionals' values, beliefs, life experiences, and cultures affect how each perceives the other and their roles in the EI system. Describe four ways each may misunderstand the other.
- **Collaboration and shared decisions may be difficult when a family perceives professionals as the experts and defer to their expertise.**
 - **Some families may perceive efforts to enlist their participation as a sign of their incompetence.**
 - **Some families may feel that assistance from outside extended family and community members is intrusive and unnecessary.**
 - **Agencies and programs of the dominant European American culture may be viewed with suspicion and distrust.**
5. Certain effective personality and behavior characteristics emerge in the literature about helping relationships. What are they and how are they manifested across cultural and linguistic differences?
- **Trust, respect, and open communication**
 - **Attention to unique beliefs and practices, showing respect and concern, and following through on plans and decisions**
6. How does worldview affect a family's perception of disability? What may be one way to successfully bridge differences of family's perceptions of disability and the EI perceptions of disability?
- **A family may view disability as fate, which cannot be changed, or they may view it as within the realm of "normal."**
 - **If families can play an active role in determining intervention needs and ways to address them, they may be more likely to participate in services, and conflicts may be less likely to occur.**
7. What three factors affect service utilization of EI? Give examples of how each factor can affect service utilization of EI.
- **Availability and types of programs and services: distance to services, centralized services are more convenient for families, families' preferences for types and amounts of available service**
 - **Recency of immigration, acculturation, language differences: the longer families have been in the United States, the more likely they are to participate in EI services, language barriers and availability of interpreters affect use of EI system**

- **Age, background, and discipline of EI professional: age of both families and service provider has been shown to affect involvement of families in EI, families tend to feel more comfortable with professionals who are not medically oriented.**
8. List eight strategies suggested by the authors to facilitate working together in EI.
- **Acknowledge and respect the uniqueness of each family system.**
 - **Develop a personalized, informal, helping relationship.**
 - **Gather and provide information in culturally appropriate and responsive ways.**
 - **Recruit, hire, and train bilingual and/or bicultural staff.**
 - **Create alliances with community leaders and community “help-givers.”**
 - **Match services to family needs and provide choices.**
 - **Develop a shared vision of the IFSP.**
 - **Evaluate and reevaluate process and outcomes for the child and family.**