

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

Session 1: Building Reliable Alliances

Study Questions and Answers for Recommended Reading D: Fazzi, Klein, Pogrund, & Salcedo

Fazzi, D.L., Klein, M.D., Pogrund, R.L., & Salcedo, P.S. (2002). Family focus: Working effectively with families. In R.L. Pogrund & D.L. Fazzi (Eds.), *Early focus: Working with young children who are blind or visually impaired and their families* (2nd ed., pp. 31-51). New York: AFB Press.

1. Describe the ways that culture is learned and why culture is dynamic.
 - **Culture, one’s values, beliefs, and behaviors, is not present at birth. Each individual learns their culture from the people they live with, through observation, imitation, and interaction.**
 - **Culture changes and develops as a group responds to events that come into their lives. War, natural disasters, technology, and mass migrations are some factors that affect a given culture. The length of time a family lives in a particular country also affects the degree to which they value their traditional culture versus the ideals of mainstream culture.**
2. Describe what can occur when professionals and families do not understand each other’s cultural beliefs and practices.
 - **Increase of misunderstanding and lack of communication**
 - **Reduced effectiveness of intervention for the child**
3. Identify the three facets of “cultural competence.”
 - **Being aware of your own culture and the biases and values that go with it and awareness of differences that exist between your own culture and someone else’s and how those differences affect early intervention**
 - **Being aware of how families’ cultures differ from your own, especially in child rearing, attitudes toward disability, and how early intervention is perceived**
 - **Learning ways of communicating and working with a family that respect the cultural differences and allow early intervention practices to take advantage of the family’s cultural values and practices**

4. Provide an example of how cultural differences in each area can affect TVIs/professionals as they work with families.
- **Independence versus interdependence: Cultural expectation of independence that values and teaches assertiveness and initiation of communication to children versus reliance on the group with a hierarchy of obedience, harmony, and respect that deems child-initiated interactions and preferences to be inappropriate**
 - **Approach to discipline: Emphasis on obedience and respect versus the opportunity to tell child's side of story, "shaming" or physical punishment versus child participation in selection of rewards and punishments, differences in age at which children begin to be disciplined, and gender differences in accepted behavior and acquiescence to rules**
 - **Influence of racism: African American parents state that one of their primary roles is to teach their children how to live in a racist environment**
 - **Family Structure: Nuclear families, extended families, inclusion of non-related people in family**
 - **Parents' roles: Teachers of developmental and academic areas, teachers of how to stand up to life's rough spots, teachers of behavior and respect, providers of care but not instruction of skills**
 - **Communication between caregiver and child: Belief that high level of verbal response to young children will enhance verbal ability versus belief of the importance of young children demonstrating respect by listening and accepting as elders speak**
 - **Effects of scarce resources: Belief of importance of stable environment and consistent caregivers versus the reality of the need to move frequently and have multiple caregivers for the child**
 - **Influence of religion on child-rearing practices: Self-responsibility and ability to change the way things are versus the sense that everything is pre-ordained and the way it is meant to be**
 - **Influence of beliefs about how children learn: Children learn as a response to adult interaction and example versus children learn as they mature and don't need adult intervention in order to learn**

5. Briefly describe how TVIs can deal with cultural differences as they work with families.
 - **Listen to families' descriptions of their reasons for their beliefs, values, and actions—why they are important to them**
 - **Explain the professional reason for using the approach the TVI is suggesting**
 - **Explore new approaches that incorporate a compromise between the two cultural modes**
 - **Integrate family beliefs and values into developmentally appropriate practice when possible**
 - **Maintain an open mind and open lines of communication**
6. Identify three views of disability that are influenced by culture and describe how each view may conflict with mainstream early intervention services.
 - **Scientific—That more is better: Early intervention has limited resources and service providers.**
 - **Caused by fate or a curse: Early intervention seeks to make changes in what is perceived to be a just fate.**
 - **The family is being punished for some wrong doing: Early intervention believes the disability is caused by a medical or developmental issue and that much can be done.**
 - **Questioning or trying to change the situation may be flouting God's actions: Early intervention is based on the premise that developmental change for the child and emotional support for the family is desirable.**
 - **Nontraditional practices will cure the disability: Early intervention believes that its services alone will bring improvement.**
 - **Disability is a sign of special treatment from a higher power and a positive focal point for the family: Early intervention tends to seek change.**
7. Identify five ways TVIs can meet the challenges of cultural diversity in early intervention and support families and their children effectively.

Participants' answers will vary (see pages 49-51 of the reading for a detailed list) but may include answers from the list below:

 - **Collaborate with families.**
 - **Be nonjudgmental but seek information regarding a family's culture.**
 - **Be aware of personal cultural biases and values.**
 - **Take time to establish rapport and trust between TVI and family.**
 - **Avoid stereotypes of cultural groups.**