

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

Session 1: Building Reliable Alliances

**Study Questions and Answers for Recommended Reading J: Turnbull
& Turnbull**

Turnbull, A.P., & Turnbull, H.R. (2001). Building reliable alliances. In *Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Collaboration for empowerment* (4th ed., pp. 56-82). Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.

1. Briefly describe the four elements of a family that the family systems approach identifies.
 - **Characteristics (such as cultural background, size and form, special challenges)**
 - **Interactions (within and between marital, parental, sibling, and extended-family relationships)**
 - **Functions (tasks or responsibilities that the family carries out such as affection, socialization, economics, and daily care)**
 - **Life cycle issues (developmental stages and transitions that the family experiences)**

2. Often the term culture is used synonymously with the words race and ethnicity. In an effort to honor cultural diversity, what is a broader range of characteristics that reliable alliances should take into consideration?

Values, decision-making styles, family roles, language, religion, background knowledge, influences of significant others, etc.

3. In thinking about cultural self-awareness, the authors state that the most dangerous trap for culturally unaware people is assuming _____.

That their way is the only right way.

4. Nearly 100 families were surveyed about what they needed and how the public sector could best support them. What was the main survey finding?

That instead of responding with a list of specific services or resources that were or could have been provided to families, they described the “hows” and the process through which professionals and agencies furnished resources. Whatever the service or resource delivered, delivering it in a flexible manner was mentioned most frequently.

5. What is one of the best ways to enhance families' great expectations?
To share with the family the success of other individuals with disabilities whose characteristics are similar to those of their son or daughter.
6. Describe two nonverbal ways of communicating.
 - **Physical attending: contact, facial expressions, and gestures**
 - **Listening: empathetic listening-listening with the intent to understand**
7. List five examples of verbal responses.
 - **Furthering responses**
 - **Paraphrasing**
 - **Response to affect**
 - **Questioning**
 - **Summarizing**
8. List four types of influencing skills.
 - **Providing information**
 - **Providing support**
 - **Focusing attention**
 - **Offering assistance**
9. What is empathetic communication?
Communicating with the ability to understand another's feelings, thoughts, and motives
10. What is one essential element to building a trusting relationship with a family?
Confidentiality
11. List and describe three of the eight obligations of reliable alliances.
 - **Knowing yourself; the more you know yourself, the better you can understand and appreciate the personalities and behaviors of others**
 - **Knowing families; avoid simplistic general understandings of families and instead appreciate each family in terms of its unique dimensions**
 - **Honoring cultural diversity; try standing in the shoes of the families with whom you work to the greatest extent possible**
 - **Affirming and building on family strengths; respect families' inherent strengths and build upon them through the collaborative process**
 - **Promoting family choices; create empowering contexts to increase families' opportunities to make their choices and to have those choices heard and heeded by professionals**

- **Affirming great expectations; parents have higher expectations for students with disabilities**
- **Communicating positively; the more accurately and constructively you and families communicate thoughts and feelings, the more successful your alliances with them will be, the more you will create an empowering context, and the more the families will be able to experience empowerment**
- **Warranting trust and respect; help parents develop high but realistic expectations for their children with disabilities**