

Classroom Suggestions: Suggestions for Working with Diverse Families of Students with Blindness or Low Vision

- Professionals and service providers need to be aware of the cultural/language challenges of diverse families and the parents' need for advocacy skills.
- Gathering valid information from the family in assessing the child's condition may take more time, questions worded to ensure correct translation into a different language if necessary, recognition of differences in home routines, and trained interpreters.
- Active learning is critical for the child, and activities and materials should be culturally sensitive (for example, not introducing toys that are excessively expensive for the family).
- Family priorities may differ from those of professionals, particularly in gaining independence in self-help skills. Some families assume longer and shorter time frames for autonomy in this area.
- Communication development should take into account the family's language and culture.
- In implementing developmentally appropriate practice in learning, cultural expectations and concerns should be considered. Some families may have very traditional views on male-female roles (for example, girls not being allowed to wear pants or boys not being allowed to play with dolls).
- Professionals should explain diagnoses, procedures, and interventions in a way that is understandable to the family and come to an understanding of the expectations and goals for their child.

Source: Chen, D. (2001). *Visual impairment in young children: A review of the literature with implications for working with families of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds*. Washington, DC: Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS). ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 478 932.