

A Day in the Life

Real life experience of life with a child with a disability for LEND trainees

Purpose: The day in the life experience is an opportunity to learn from families just by being with them. You will go outside the clinical setting and see what families go through on a regular basis, to see the little events that make up a family's life. By attending doctor's appointments, trying to get the family off to school, going to a restaurant, etc., with families, you will have an opportunity to see firsthand, the obstacles that families face daily. The goal is to deepen your appreciation of families and to increase your capacity to work in a family centered manner.

Assignment

Identify a family of a child with special needs. You may choose any family that you'd like, however, do not work with a family with whom you have a direct or indirect clinical relationship. Possible sources for families include a friend of a friend or contacting a family resource center, support group or disability specific organization to help identify families who are willing to work with you. If you have difficulty identifying a family, please talk with Fran Goldfarb.

The time commitment for this assignment is approximately 8 hours. It will include:
1 interview and
1-2 Observations

Begin with an interview to get an overview of the family's story and what the family experiences on a regular basis. Please gather information on the types of services that the child/family receives. Your observations should include 1 in-home and 1 community-based experience, such as attending an IEP, going to the market or getting a haircut, doing homework. This can be accomplished in one day or two separate observations. Be aware of the family's strengths, but also pay particular attention to their challenges and how they have or haven't been able to meet those challenges. Keep a journal reflecting on your experiences and what impact this ongoing relationship has on their understanding of what it is like for families of children with disabilities.

Please write a one to two page summary of your experience incorporating some information about the family, but concentrating on what you've observed, your reaction to the experience and how this experience will impact how you work with families. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with Fran Goldfarb.

Timeline

Please have your family identified and visits completed by March 2006. Your summary is due **April 12, 2006**. Additionally you will be asked to give a brief description of your Day in the Life experience at graduation.