

## **New Mexico LEND 2005-2006 Family-Practica Project/ Assignment:**

Each trainee/ student is paired with a family of a child with a disability over the two academic semesters. Throughout the year brown bag lunch sessions are scheduled for group discussion, support and feedback. Students are encouraged to maintain a journal of their observational experiences and reflections and meet individually with the family and core faculty member at least once each semester. A two to three reflection paper is due at the end of the year, which details project experience, challenges and lessons learned.

### **During the first semester:**

Trainees/Students spend time with the family in a series of structured activities, such as doctor visits, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) / Individualized Education Plans (IEP) conference meetings, therapy sessions, family recreational outings and errands etc. The student's role during the structured time is predominantly that of an observer. **A minimum of 8** contact hours is required within the first semester and provides students and families with a chance to get to know each other in preparation for the more intense relationship that develops during the second semester.

### **During the second semester:**

Trainees/ students are required to spend **a minimum of 16 contact hours** with the family. How this time is spent is defined by family priorities for the kind of assistance they want from the student. Each student/ family pair will then develop an individualized mutually agreed upon written plan for what the student and family will accomplish together. The following are some examples of practica projects:

- Make a video tape of a child who is transitioning to a new program to assist the providers in the new environment
- Create an "all about me" book for a child's transition to a new school
- Create a scrapbook with the family of the child's first years
- Assist a family of a child with intense needs to grocery shop and prepare a meal
- Provide one-to-one attention to the sibling of a young child with multi-needs.
- Locate and summarize information about a rare genetic disorder
- Create a record keeping book for a child who has multiple medical and therapy providers
- Assist family in daily routines and chores
- Help to locate a respite/ childcare providers
- Research available eligibility for services, programs or entitlement benefits such as SSI, Medicaid etc.

The plan is signed by the student, family and core faculty member in the beginning of the second semester and reviewed at least once before the end of the semester by all parties.

## **Goals of the practica experience and assignments:**

1. Provide students with an opportunity to view children with disabilities and their families outside of a clinical setting
2. Provide students with the opportunity to recognize that services or recommendations that may appear to be critically important from a professional perspective decrease in importance when viewed within the context of the family's daily routine.
3. Provide an opportunity for students to listen to families choices and priorities
4. Provide students with an opportunity to build collaborative partnerships with families

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