

FAMILY MENTORING
Information for LEND Fellows
2005-06

Family Visits

The Family Mentoring Leadership Project should provide a useful experience in learning more, through a first-hand visiting experience, about how a family of a child with special needs functions both at home and in the community. We ask that you arrange two visits with a designated volunteer family to learn more about their perspectives on disability and special health care needs as well as some of the challenges they may face in advocating for their child with special needs. Although you may have professional knowledge and experience, please remember that we have asked families to participate in *your* training; they have *not* asked to be evaluated.

The goal of this activity is to learn from a family about the impact of having a child with a disability, their experiences working with professionals from various disciplines and the responsiveness of service systems to the family's needs and desires. We hope that you will have an opportunity to understand the steps that a family might be using to work with their school district, health providers or other formal systems of support. We also hope that you will have the chance to see the child as a member of his or her community.

The steps in the process are straightforward:

- ✓ After receiving the family's contact information, call the family to introduce yourself;
- ✓ determine a mutually convenient time for a first visit;
- ✓ conduct the visit;
- ✓ complete the **Family Visit Interview and Observation** section of the attached form (do not work directly from this form during your visit but rather use the form as an outline of what to discuss with the family);
- ✓ arrange a time to accompany the family on a community outing (restaurant, shopping mall, supermarket, community recreation activity, church/synagogue/temple, doctor's appointment, neighborhood playground, etc.);
- ✓ conduct the second visit;
- ✓ complete the **Community Visit Observation** section of the form; and
- ✓ follow-up with a thank you call or personal note.

Follow-up

We will meet on **Thursday, March 2, 2006** to review and discuss the outcomes of the family mentoring activities. Please complete the section on **Post-Interview Impressions** prior to this meeting to serve as an outline for your presentation and further discussion.

Portfolios

The attached forms may be included as a summary of your experiences. Most fellows also include a narrative description of the visits with a personal reaction or reflection.