

# 10 For Culturally Responsive TIPS Planning Meetings with Families

*Use these strategies to partner effectively with diverse families before and during IEP and IFSP planning meetings.*

- Brief the family about the meeting, its purpose, and who will be present well in advance of the meeting.
- Reduce the number of professionals participating unless the family has requested that others be present.
- Encourage families to bring people who are important to them—relatives, spiritual leaders, friends, and so forth.
- Be sure that a skilled interpreter is present if families are ELLs or non-English speaking.
- Incorporate practices that are culturally comfortable for the family, such as serving tea, taking time to get acquainted before beginning the meeting, or conducting the meeting in a highly formal manner.
- Encourage family input without creating embarrassment. If family members don't feel comfortable interacting in a public forum, be sure that the service provider who knows the family best has spoken with them ahead of time and can represent their perspective at the meeting.
- Ensure that the goals, objectives, or outcomes that are being developed are matched to the family's concerns and priorities.
- Use appropriate resources that are designed for or are a part of the family's cultural community; for example, referral to a health care provider who shares the same language and culture.
- Enlist cultural mediators or guides to help match families with resources. Coming from the same country does not ensure that individuals share the same beliefs, values, behaviors, or language.
- Allow time for questions, and discuss the kinds of questions other families often ask. This allows questions to be answered for family members who may feel uncomfortable about public questioning.

