MODULE 15
AGENDA

I. Words Are Important

II. Seven Trans-cultural Parenting Techniques

III. What to Do???

IV. “Losing Isaiah”

Seven Trans-cultural Parenting Techniques

■ **INVEST** intensely in parenting. Understand that transracial parenting is not laid-back, catch-as-catch-can parenting. The demands are great, but so are the rewards. You and your family must become intensely invested in the parenting experience.

■ **TOLERATE** no racially or ethnically biased remarks. Refuse to tolerate any kind of racially or ethnically biased remark. This should include remarks about your child's race or ethnic group, other races and ethnic groups, or any other characteristic such as gender, religion, age and physical or other disability.

■ **SUPPORT** is absolutely needed. Surround yourselves with supportive family and friends. You need a supportive community comprised of many races -- those who will be role models and provide inspiration, those who will stimulate your thinking, those who fill your desire for cultural diversity, and those who will challenge you in constructive and respectful ways.

■ **CELEBRATE** all culture. While it is important to teach your child about differences among people, it is also important to point out similarities. As much as you want to celebrate your child's distinctive features, he or she also needs to feel a sense of belonging in the family.

■ **TALK** about race and culture. Parents should talk about racial issues, even if your child does not bring up the subject. Use natural opportunities, such as a television program or newspaper article that talk about race in some way. Let your child know that you feel comfortable discussing the positive aspects of race and culture as well as the difficult ones.

■ **EXPOSE** your child to a variety of experiences so that he or she develops physical and intellectual skills that build self-esteem. Be alert to negative messages (stereotypes) that are associated with any race or culture. Point them out as stereotypes. Emphasize that each person is unique and that we all bring our own individual strengths and weaknesses into the world. Frequently compliment your child on his or her strengths.

■ **TAKE** your child to places where most of the people present are from his or her race or ethnic group. Your child will benefit from the experience of being in a group in which the people present are from his/her ethnic group. Children usually enjoy these events very much, and many families who take in events like this find it to be a wonderful learning experience.

Can I Parent Trans-culturally?

Please discuss these issues with your family. Also, remember that there is not always a clear right or wrong answer. These questions are meant to encourage discussion, openness, and an honest self-assessment.

- When and how did you first become aware of your race and ethnicity?
- What is your earliest memory of interacting with a person of another race?
- What do you know about the race and culture of a child you might consider fostering or adopting?
- How personally involved are you with other races and cultures?
- Have you had experiences with people from other cultures? If so, what were your feelings?
- Could you identify positive role models in other cultures?
- Have you discussed transcultural placement with the significant people in your life (i.e., extended family, coworkers, neighbors)?
- Are you prepared to deal comfortably and knowledgeably with other people's prejudices, biases, and concerns, as needed?
- What do you already know about the dietary, skin, hair, and health care needs of children from other races or cultures?
- How culturally diverse are your neighborhood, place of worship, social gathering spots, and shopping areas?
- What additional support or assistance would you require to successfully parent cross-culturally?