

Tips for Sharing A Vision Conference Attendees

Here are some ideas from “veteran conference goers” to help make the most of your Sharing A Vision (SAV) Conference experience.

Preparing for the Conference:

- Make sure you have hotel reservations and have completed and submitted conference registration. Take advantage of reduced costs for early bird registration!
- If you're on a budget, you can volunteer your time at the conference in return for reduced registration (see the conference brochure or visit the SAV website for volunteer information). Families can apply for stipends to offset their travel and/or childcare expenses (refer to family stipend info on the SAV website). www.sharingavision.org
- Pack your cell phone charger for your hotel room and don't forget to take it with you when you check out.
- Bring business cards – either from your agency or printed out on your home computer to help with networking with other families and providers.
- Bring a sheet of address labels. This comes in handy at exhibits where you can sign up for information or drawings.
- Bring your acknowledgement card that was mailed to you. You will need to show it to receive your registration materials and conference packet. This will help to reduce long lines at registration.
- Create an emergency plan with your family so that they know how to reach you at the conference/hotel. During daytime hours, you could direct them to ask for the Sharing A Vision registration desk for assistance in reaching you.
- SAV is going “green” in 2009. Handouts made available to SAV by presenters will be available on the SAV website starting July 1. Attendees will need to download and print the handouts of the workshops they wish to attend prior to the conference.

At the Conference:

- Arrive in plenty of time on Day 1 of the conference to get through the registration process and to orient yourself to the building. You can usually expect a line at registration the first day. Plan on arriving **more** than 30 minutes prior to the start of the conference.
- Upon arrival, orient yourself. Familiarize yourself with all of the conference locations (Workshop rooms, general sessions, luncheons, exhibits, hotel restaurant, restrooms, and gift shop).
- Bring your favorite personal survival “ musts” such as aspirin, Advil, gum, cough drops and bottle of water.

- There's a map in the conference guide. Study it. It's amazing how confusing big conference centers can be! Know where you are and where you're going. Look at the floor plans in your program.
- Look at the program beforehand and plan your day. Decide what sessions you want to attend and pick alternatives in case the session you pick is full. Sessions do fill up and are closed by the session facilitator when at room capacity.
- If a session isn't meeting your needs, leave quietly and at an appropriate time. You only receive credit for sessions you attend in entirety.
- Turn your cell phone off or set it to vibrate throughout the conference. If you must answer your phone during a session, please quietly exit the room to take the call. Others will appreciate you for it.
- Bring a sweater or layer your clothing so that you will be comfortable whether the room is hot or cold. Conference planners will have no control over room temperatures.
- Write notes on the back of business cards you obtain from others to remind you what you learned or what you were going to do in regards to this person/agency.
- Wear your nametag high so people can see it.
- Look at other people's name tags for use in networking and meeting new people. Assume that anyone wearing a conference committee tag is extra approachable!
- You may have to stand in a few lines (at registration, to get coffee, etc.). Use the extra time to your advantage and network with others in the line.
- Wear comfortable shoes or bring an extra pair to change into.
- Go see the exhibits. Consider using one of the breakout times to visit the exhibits! Exhibits are fun and often have fun freebies you can take (plus you may learn something).
- If you are a family member of a person with a disability, be sure to visit the Family Table in the exhibit hall. The folks there want to talk with you!
- Keep a list of people you met that you want to contact after the conference.
- Throughout the conference, keep a list of how you plan to put what you've learned into action when you get home. Refer to the list when you get back home and take action!
- Be sure to complete and turn in your evaluation form. The conference planning committee will use the information you provide to plan and improve the next conference!