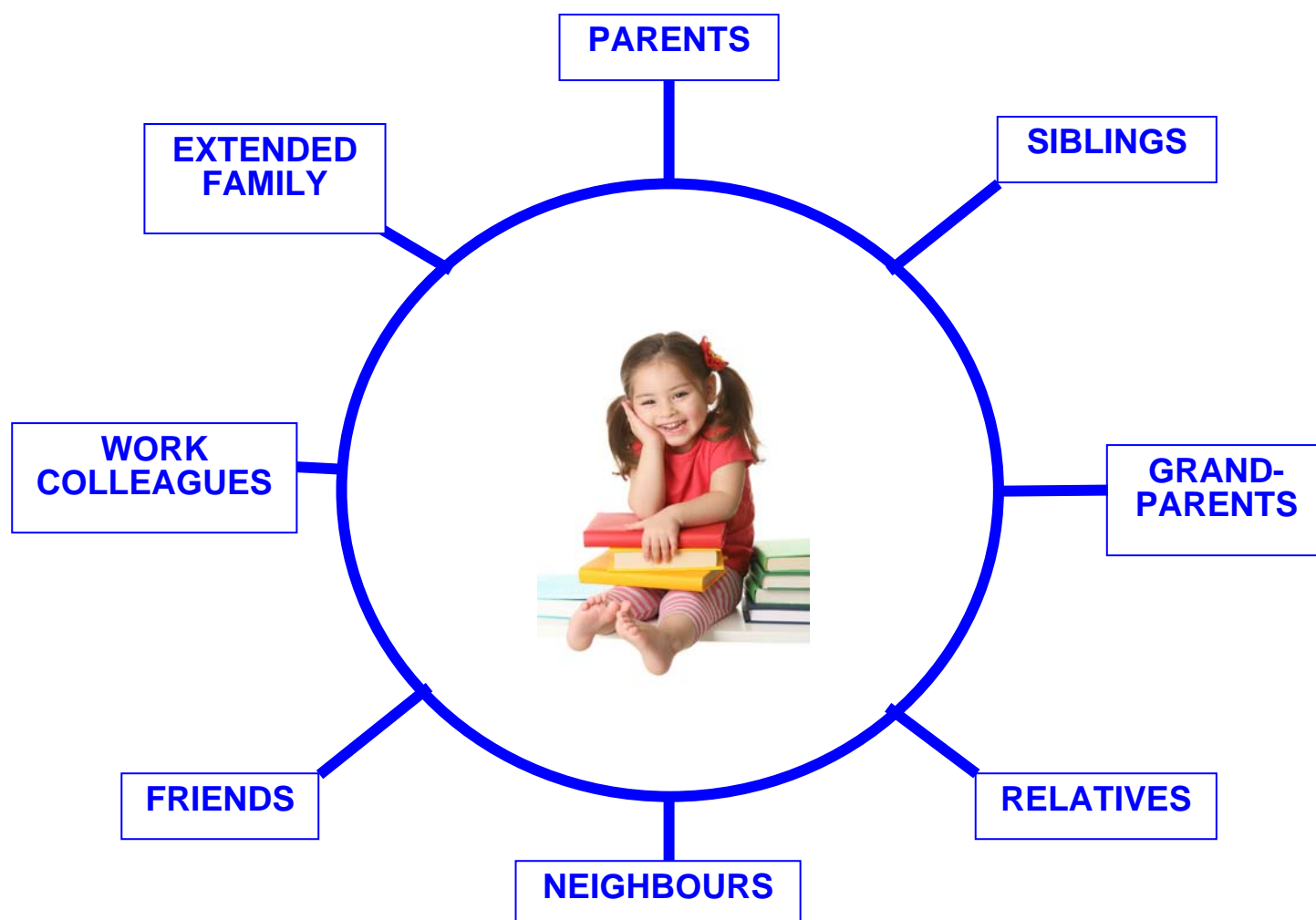


# Role of the Key Worker – Supporting the Whole Family



- POINTS TO CONSIDER
- WHY DO FAMILIES NEED A KEY WORKER?



The news that a child has a visual impairment, perhaps with additional problems, is one of the most frightening and confusing pieces of information that any parent/family, will ever receive. The upset and impact on a family is multi-faceted and produces a range of emotions within the individual members of the family and

within the family dynamics. The family may become divided and may not function at full strength – this is when support is most needed.

To support the family, the Key Worker must appreciate, understand and respect, that families differ according to, environment, circumstances, personal situation, ethnicity and culture. The Key Worker needs to listen and be aware that any family may not fit into the Key Worker's own stereotypical perspective.

When working with a family, it is important that the Key Worker focuses on the emotional support, advice and information the parents/family need, whilst addressing the issues for the family, relating to the hospital diagnosis, the co-ordination of the services and the need for advocacy, if appropriate.

Good quality support is the major element of the of the Key Workers role, contact with the family should be regular and pro-active, working across agencies, referring where appropriate, with the family's consent.

There is always the need for the Key Worker and family relationship to be supportive and open, the Key Worker should work the with strengths of the parents and family, finding ways to enhance the individual and family's own coping skills, based on and using a family centred approach.

Disclaimer: Information sheets have been produced to provide information and advice for the parents of visually impaired children. Changes may occur in theories and legislation, however, the information sheets have been written in good faith, as a general guidance tool. If you have any questions with regard to issues raised by the information sheet, please contact the National Blind Children's Society, National Family Support and Information Manager.