

## 2005 Internal Evaluation Key Findings

Results from all of the sources of data suggest that at the end of SpecialQuest III, the program had a significant effect on EHS/MSHS teams, family members, and their community partners. Key findings from the evaluation of the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program in the third year include:

### Retaining 90% of Phase II Teams

In Year 1, 279 EHS/MSHS teams attended SpecialQuest. At the end of Year 3, 252 of these teams are still participating in SpecialQuest, representing a 90% retention rate.

### Enrolling More Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

EHS/MSHS programs are reporting enrolling more infants and toddlers with Part C Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) in their programs.

### Implementing Targeted Practices that Support Inclusion

Overall, SpecialQuest teams report that EHS/MSHS programs have moved from partially implementing towards fully implementing promising practices that support inclusion, integrated services, and family leadership.

### Increasing Participants' Skills and Comfort

EHS/MSHS staff, families, and community partners reported an increase in their skills and comfort in serving infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in natural environments such as EHS and Child Care.

### Supporting Families as Partners and Leaders

As a result of SpecialQuest, participants indicated an increase in their skills related to supporting families to be informed decision-makers and leaders.

- Families noted feeling supported, informed and valued by the EHS/MSHS programs.
- The individualized access to information, resources, and support provided by EHS/MSHS and other community partners appears to support family members to be leaders and make informed decisions, particularly for their own family.

### Increasing Reciprocal Referrals

SpecialQuest has positively influenced the coordination between community agencies. SpecialQuest teams have reported a significant increase in reciprocal referrals occurring between EHS/MSHS and early intervention between Years 1, 2, and 3 of SpecialQuest.



### Implementing Team Action Plans

Teams continue to implement their SpecialQuest II Action Plans with 73 percent of all Action Plans completed or in progress.

### Sharing of SpecialQuest Training Materials

Participants and Learning Coaches report sharing the SpecialQuest training materials with approximately 50,000 individuals over the past two years.

### Continuing the Quest

SpecialQuest teams from the first phase indicated that two-thirds of the teams have completed or are still working on their 5-Year Action Plans.

A large number of Phase I teams (66 percent) reported using the SpecialQuest Training Guides and Videotapes, demonstrating the lasting impact that SpecialQuest is having on communities.

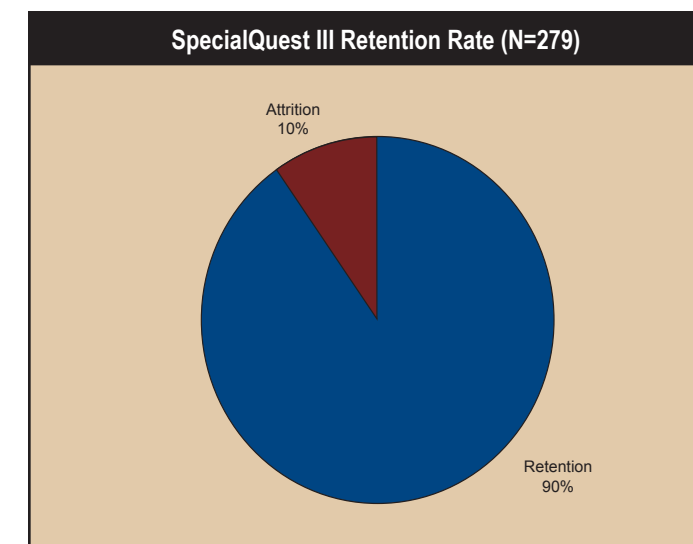
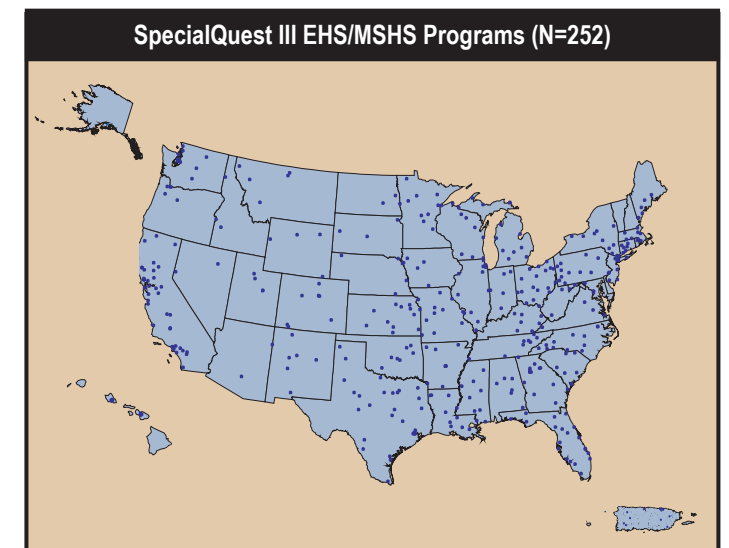
It is clear that at the end of the third year of Phase II, the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program has had a significant effect on EHS/MSHS teams, family members, and their community partners. SpecialQuest teams have reported a great deal of success towards fully implementing strategies that create a foundation for inclusive practices in their community.

## Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program 2005 Internal Evaluation Summary

The mission of the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program is to support Early Head Start (EHS) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) staff and family members—in collaboration with Early Intervention, Head Start, and Child Care—to develop skills and strategies for accessing and using services, resources, and technology to include infants and toddlers with significant disabilities and their families in EHS/MSHS programs.

In 2005, the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program supported 252 EHS/MSHS teams nationally through intensive annual training events called SpecialQuests and on-site follow up over the course of the past three years. This report summarizes individual, team, and program change during the third year of training that has occurred, focusing on:

- Including Children with Disabilities
- Supporting Families as Partners and Leaders
- Promoting Integrated Services
- Implementing and Sustaining the Change



EHS/MSHS program retention rate was high with 252 out of the original 279 teams returning in Year 3 (90%).

SpecialQuest teams are composed of up to six members. EHS/MSHS Administrators, family members of a child with a disability, Early Interventionists, and Child Care Partners are recruited as priority members. Expenses for their participation are provided by the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program.

Additional team members could include the EHS/MSHS staff or Head Start staff. These team members' expenses for participation are covered by the EHS/MSHS programs' training funds. Just over 58 percent of the teams that attended SpecialQuest III included a fifth and/or sixth team member with 85 percent of teams having at least 4 team members.

Team member turnover was moderate with 28 percent of the participants at SpecialQuest III being first time attendees. This was a decrease from 31 percent in Year 2.

*"This continues to be the best training model to effect change that I have ever attended."*

—EHS Administrator

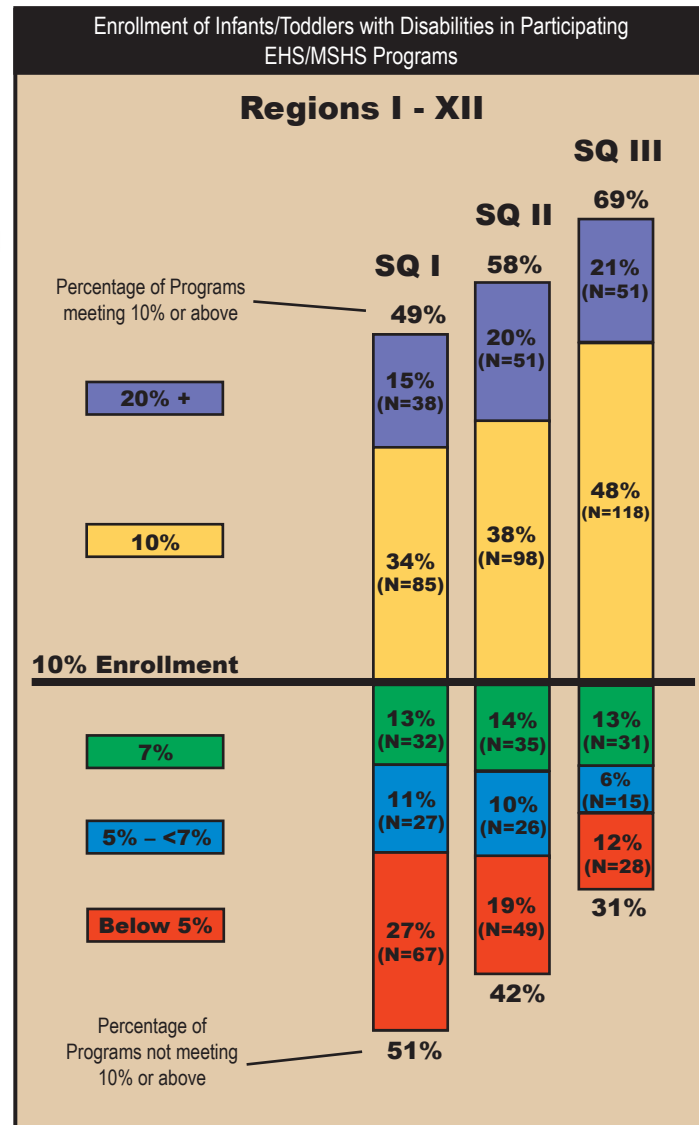
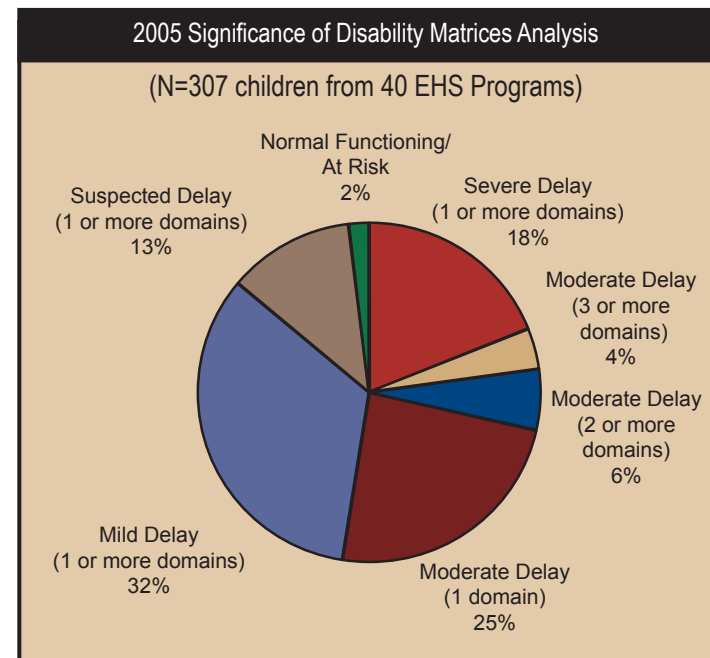


“As I shared my experiences, I found that I am not alone and that everyone brings their excellent ideas, suggestions and knowledge to the table.” —EHS/MSHS Staff

As part of the registration process for SpecialQuest, each team was asked to provide the number of infants and toddlers enrolled, as well as the number of enrolled children with Part C Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs).

Overall, across Regions I-XII, the percent of the EHS/MSHS programs reporting the enrollment of infants and toddlers with disabilities in at least ten percent of their slots, increased from 49 percent in Year 1 to 69 percent in Year 3. This is a 20 percent increase over the three years. In Year 3, 37 percent more EHS/MSHS programs reported meeting the 10 percent requirement than in Year 1.

The mean percentage of children with Part C IFSPs enrolled in programs that attended SpecialQuest III is 13.8 percent, up from 11.3 percent in Year 1.



In an effort to understand the types of developmental delays and functional abilities of infants and toddlers with Part C IFSPs who are enrolled in EHS programs across the country, programs were randomly selected to complete the Significance of Disability Matrix for each child with an IFSP enrolled in their EHS program.

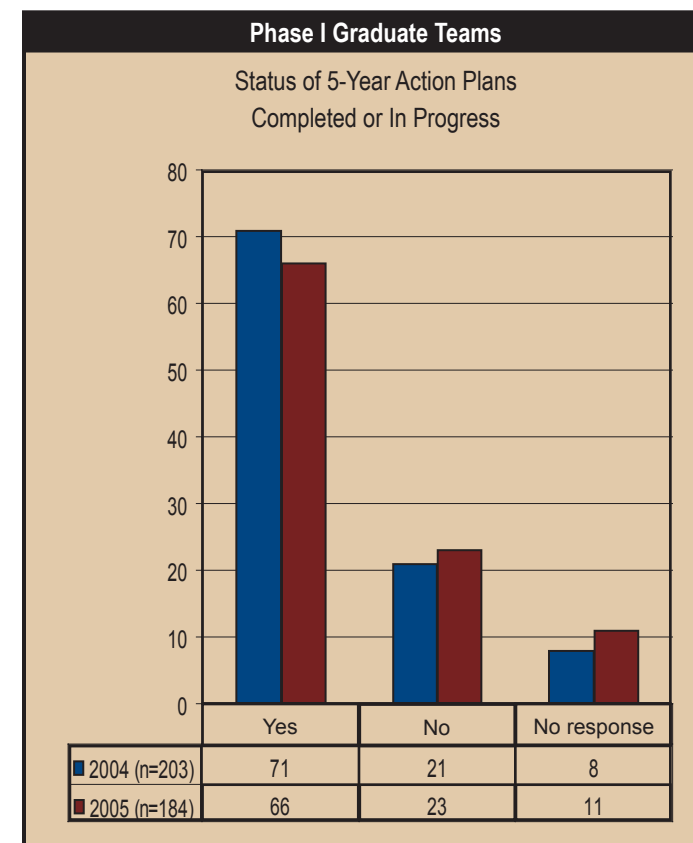
In 2005, 40 programs completed the matrix. Over half of the 307 children with Part C IFSPs were reported to have at least a moderate developmental delay.

Overall, 18 percent of the infants and toddlers with IFSPs served by EHS programs were reported to have a severe delay in at least one area of development. Given the level of incidence of severe disabilities, this figure demonstrates a strong commitment by EHS programs to serve children with more significant disabilities.

Stories from SpecialQuest Graduates

As a way to stay connected to the 240 graduate teams from the first phase of SpecialQuest (1997 - 2002), 48 individuals were recruited to serve as SpecialQuest Ambassadors. These individuals are graduates from the first phase of SpecialQuest, and are leaders and advocates for the inclusion of children with disabilities and their families. They promote continuing the quest in and beyond their communities.

Each SpecialQuest Ambassador was given a list of graduate programs to contact in an effort to deepen understanding of the practices and strategies used by SpecialQuest graduate teams to enhance the quality of services provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.



The Ambassadors connected with 184 graduate programs. The Ambassadors explored the progress they have made toward their 5-year Action Plan. In 2004, 71% of the teams reported that they were still working on the five-year plan that they developed as part of their last SpecialQuest. In 2005, this number decreased slightly to 66%, however, a large majority of programs appear to be continuing on the path towards implementing these long-range plans.

Of the 184 teams that responded, 69% of them reported that their SpecialQuest team was either still meeting (36%) or that SpecialQuest concepts were embedded into an on-going early childhood committee that discusses issues related to the mission of SpecialQuest.

The Ambassadors also explored the graduate teams' use of the SpecialQuest Training Guides and Videotapes. Overall, 66% of the respondents indicated that they have used a portion of the materials that they received from The Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program.

“I believe that the continued correspondence has helped the programs feel more connected and encouraged to continue the quest.”  
—SpecialQuest Ambassador

**Expanding the Sphere of Influence**

A critical outcome of the training program relates to expanding the sphere of influence beyond individual team members who attend SpecialQuest in order to create and maintain “learning communities.” One of the ways this is occurring is through increased access to effective and appropriate training materials, such as those developed by the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program.

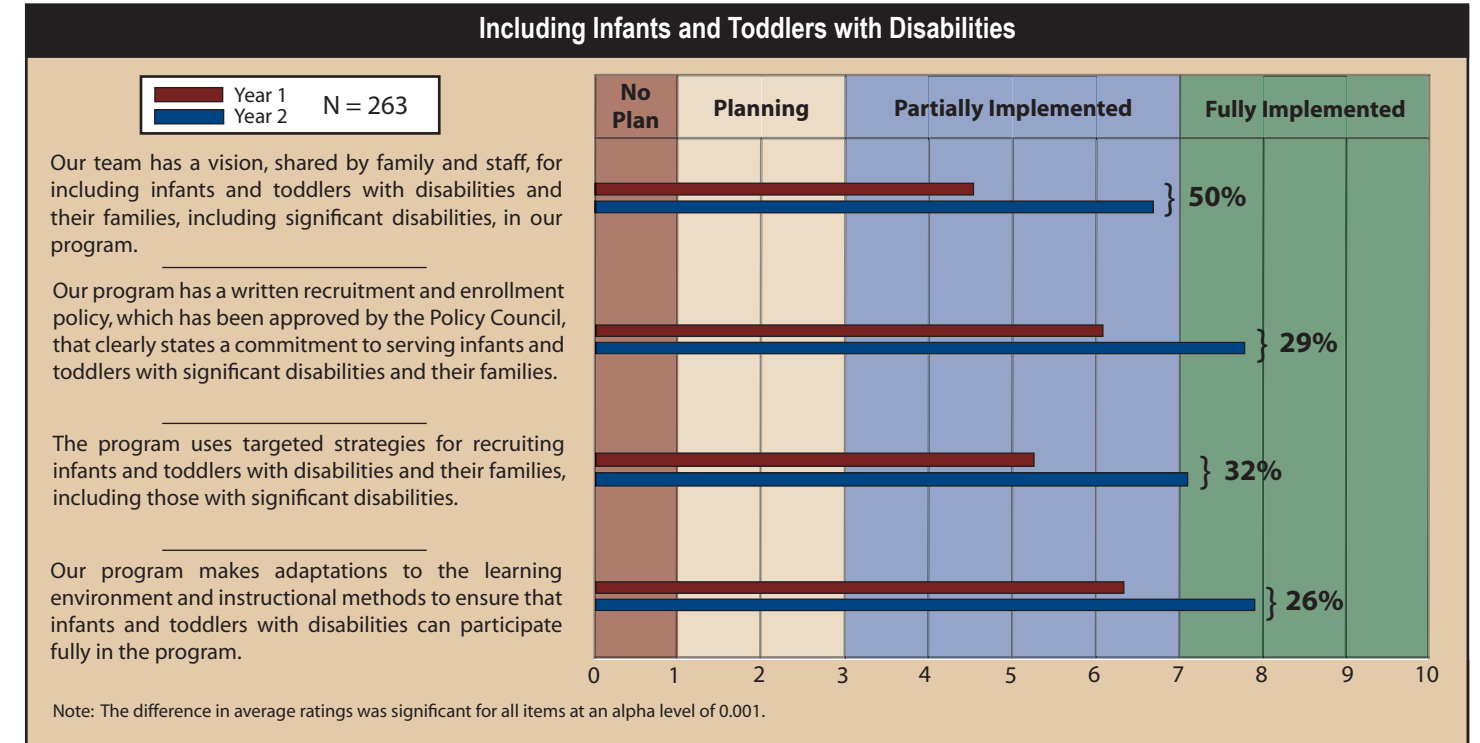
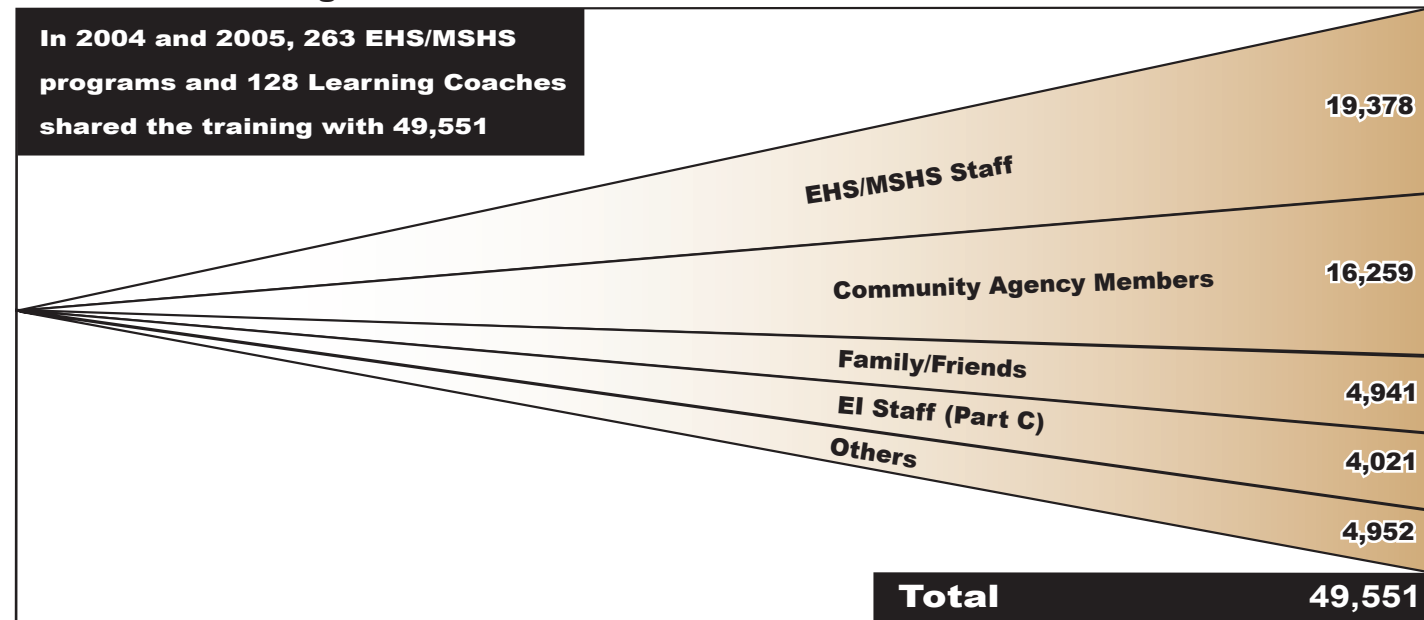
As part of the evaluation process, EHS/MSHS programs and Hilton/Early Head Start Program Learning Coaches were asked how they “shared the training” by using SpecialQuest materials outside of the specific training events.

- In 2004, 253 SpecialQuest teams indicated that they shared SpecialQuest materials with 20,656 persons. The Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program consultants (N=94) also reported sharing the training with 6,237 people for a total of 26,893 persons in 2004.
- In 2005, 263 SpecialQuest teams and 128 Learning Coaches indicated sharing the training with an additional 22,658 people.

Over the last two years, 49,551 individuals who did not attend SpecialQuest trainings were exposed to the work of the SpecialQuest teams and related SpecialQuest materials.

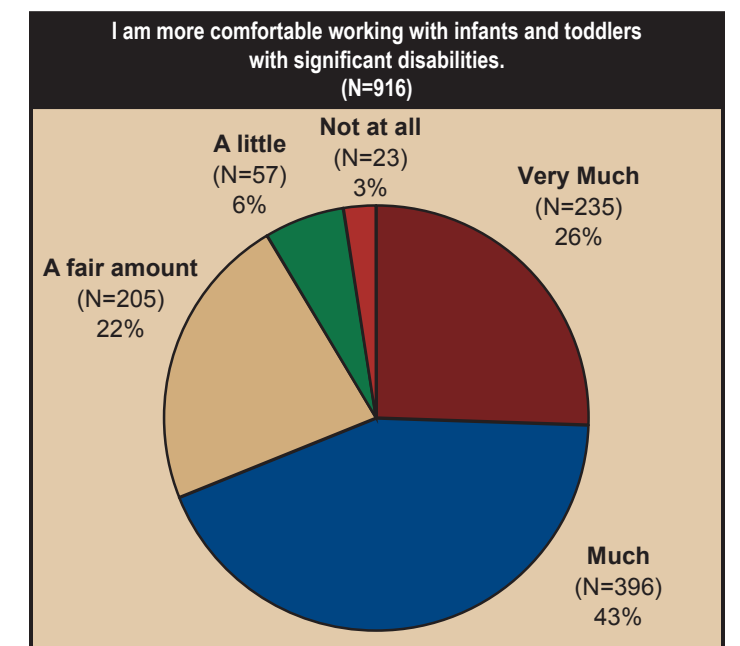
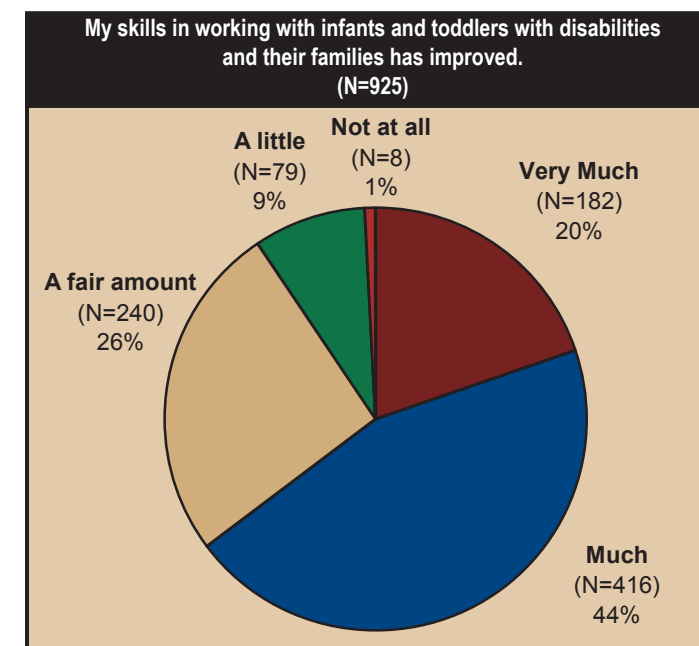
“We’ve developed a PowerPoint presentation and it showed how Part C and Early Head Start merged our services together. We can use that for Early Head Start training, and they can use it for some other training.”  
—Disability Services Coordinator

**Share the Training 2004 and 2005**



Programs rated themselves on four specific practices in the area of inclusion that related to the current level of EHS/MSHS programs’ ability to effectively identify and serve infants and toddlers with disabilities. SpecialQuest teams in general increased in scores from Year 1 to Year 2, moving from partially implementing to fully implementing these practices (see chart above).

Participants cited the provision of training as an important factor in nurturing a positive attitude toward enrolling and serving infants and toddlers with disabilities in EHS/MSHS programs. When asked three to four months after attending SpecialQuest what the impact of the training was, participants reported significant increases in their skills and comfort in working with infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families (see charts below).





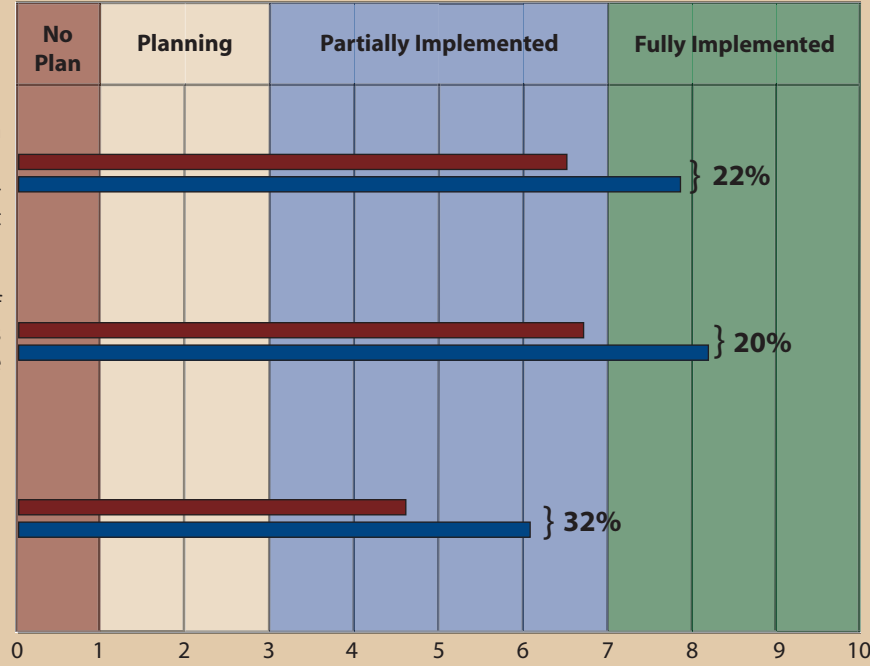
Families as Partners and Leaders

Year 1 Year 2 N = 263

Our program believes that family members of children with disabilities (mothers, fathers, grandparents, etc.) have valuable perspectives that guide decision-making about particular children and the program at large.

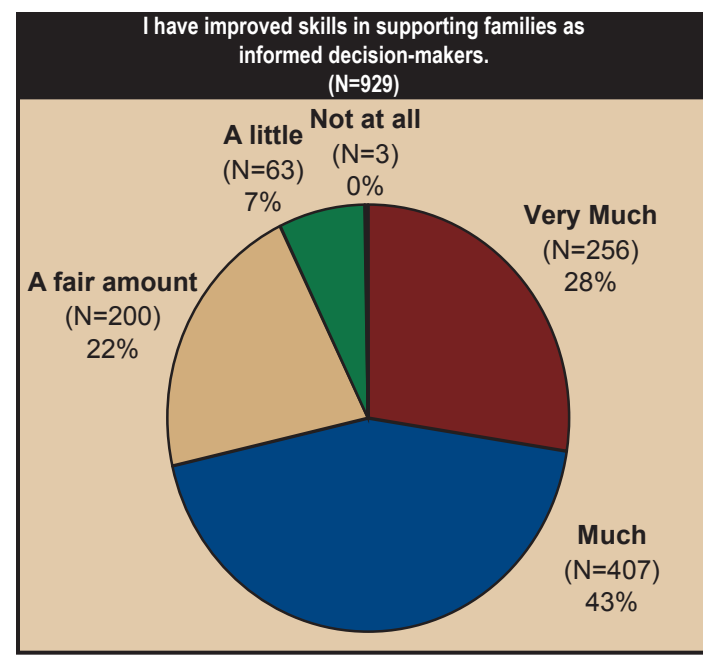
Our program consciously involves family members of infants and toddlers with disabilities as active partners in decision-making about their child based on the family members' priorities and preferences.

Our program supports families who have children with disabilities to expand their leadership opportunities in family-to-family support, program operations, and community advisory boards, based on their priorities and preference.



Note: The difference in average ratings was significant for all items at an alpha level of 0.001.

*"I was able to connect with other parents and share our experiences."*  
—Family Member



Programs rated themselves on three promising practices that related to EHS/MSHS programs' current practices around increasing families' access to information, resources, and support. Programs reported moving from partially implementing toward fully implementing these practices.

Participants indicated that their participation in SpecialQuest had an impact on their skills in supporting families to be informed decision-makers, with 71 percent noting that their skills were changed "much" or "very much."

In addition, family members described the support and information provided by SpecialQuest and their programs that enabled them to understand their child's disability and to make decisions for their child.

*"They try to include us in every decision that they make. Anything they do in the classroom, they keep us involved with."* —Family Member

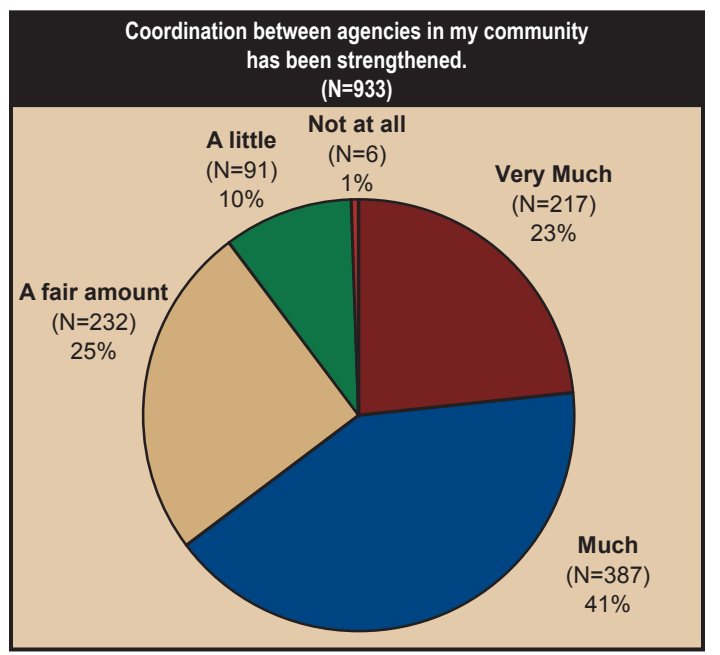


*"I learned more about Early Head Start and Head Start policies and resources. I have a better perspective of how we can work together."*  
—Part C Partner

EHS/MSHS programs realized a number of successes in their efforts to work more collaboratively with families and community partners (including Early Intervention, Head Start, and Child Care).

Overall, participants indicated that because of their participation in SpecialQuest, the coordination between agencies in their community had been strengthened. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the participants indicated that coordination was at least "much" strengthened.

Programs rated themselves on four practices related to their belief in the importance of collaboration with family members and community partners in serving children with significant disabilities and their families. In general, the programs indicated an increase in average rating from Year 1 to Year 2, again moving towards fully implementing these four practices.



*"SpecialQuest encourages and fosters the importance of joint visits with the Early Intervention/EHS team, and the other community resources."*  
—EHS/MSHS Staff

