

Appendix G

Glossary of SpecialQuest Terms

Action Plans

Action plans organize the specific steps to move toward a goal, detailing what will be done, who will complete the steps, when they will be completed, and how people will know if they have accomplished their goal. Action plans guide teams as they implement new strategies for serving infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, and help teams track and celebrate their accomplishments. Action plans are flexible and can be changed to respond to situations not anticipated when they were developed.

Adaptations and Accommodations

Adaptations and accommodations are supports that enable a child to participate in daily routines and activities. Adaptations are changes to individualize activities or the environment to meet a child's unique needs. Assistive technology is an example of an adaptation. In an early childhood environment an adaptation might be that a very active child is actively engaged in story time by responding to the story with movements related to the story. Accommodations in an early childhood environment might include an individual using sign language while reading a story or asking a child with Down Syndrome to gesture or use sign language rather than talking to communicate.

Adult Learning

Research has identified strategies for training that foster changes in the behavior of professionals in their work settings. These include addressing participants' needs, addressing differences in learning styles, establishing clear expectations, and providing activities and experiences during which participants can apply information to a work-related problem. These strategies have been used in planning the SpecialQuest Multimedia Training Library in order to maximize each participant's ability to implement practices and ideas from the Library in their work.

Art Materials

Art materials are provided at SpecialQuest trainings to allow participants to use a variety of modalities for learning and integrating new information. Trainers encourage participants' use of the art materials during the sessions and know that, for some people, creative activities may support listening and learning.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology refers to tools that allow individuals with disabilities to participate in everyday activities. These tools provide support for play, communication, movement, and more. For infants and toddlers with disabilities, assistive technology may take the form of switch-operated toys, communication devices, specially designed utensils, or equipment that supports optimal positioning or movement. There are many forms of assistive technology. Assistive technology can be purchased or created using everyday materials.

Causes to Pause

Causes to Pause are things that make us stop and think; things that we need to consider, but are not necessarily problems. They are situations "in which a gap is perceived to exist between what is and what should be" (VanGundy, 1998). Challenges and barriers, or Causes to Pause, are inevitable in our work and in life. At SpecialQuest trainings, participants have the opportunity to reflect on and use problem-solving strategies to address their challenges and issues, and to use trainers and fellow participants to gather input, insights and information about their Causes to Pause.

Collaboration

Infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families often need a wide variety of services from various agencies, programs, and professionals from different disciplines to ensure that they are supported in the most effective way possible. In order for these services to be provided in an efficient and coordinated manner, service providers must communicate and work together to compliment each other's contributions for early intervention. Collaboration is a process that requires a long-term commitment and a shared vision among families, service providers, and agencies.

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is a process of examining where a program stands, tracking progress on long- and short-term goals, evaluating strengths and weaknesses, identifying obstacles to goals, reflecting on current successes and failures, and identifying needed resources and information. The SpecialQuest Continuous Improvement Process is an integral part of the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program. Staff collects information from participants in a variety of ways and uses that information to adjust activities and goals, and to guide planning. In addition, participants, teams and programs repeatedly plan, act, reflect, and change to create a culture of ongoing learning and continuous improvement in their agencies.

Current Reality

It is important for us to take stock of what is currently happening in our programs and communities prior to making action plans. Identifying strengths, resources, and weaknesses will allow us to focus our attention where it is most needed so we can maximize the impact of our work.

Early Head Start (EHS)

Early Head Start was initially authorized in 1994 by the Head Start Bureau to provide comprehensive services to low-income pregnant women and infants and toddlers and their families. EHS serves over 70,000 infants and toddlers and their families across the country.

Early Intervention (EI)

Early intervention providers are professionals who work with infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. They come from a variety of professional backgrounds and bring knowledge of disabilities, infant/toddler development, working with families whose children have disabilities, and service systems. Early intervention eligibility criteria and service delivery systems vary from state to state. Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the authorizing legislation for Early Intervention.

Follow-Up

Research on adult learning indicates that participants are more likely to implement new ideas and skills if they receive follow up support while incorporating these new strategies into their work.

Head, Heart, and Hands

SpecialQuest trainings are designed to provide experiences that touch participants' heads, hearts, and hands. Information provided on best practices and resources fills our heads. Panel presentations, videotapes, personal stories, and group sharing touch our hearts. Skill practice, reflection and Action Plans provide us with specific things we will do (with our hands) when we return home. All three of these aspects are important in order to create sustained change.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA is the authorizing legislation for all early intervention and special education services for individuals with disabilities and their families, from birth through 21. IDEA was reauthorized in 2004. See Appendix B for websites that provide more information about IDEA.

Journaling

Journaling is a tool to support the reflection and learning process. Participants record their thoughts in a notebook, draw or paint their impressions, or record their ideas on a tape recorder.

Leadership

At SpecialQuest trainings, leadership is viewed as a dynamic collaboration between families and service providers. Each individual brings his/her unique experiences, skills and knowledge to the partnership. Leadership is built on a series of collaborative interactions that are revisited as circumstances change. Collaborative leadership occurs when together families and service providers review and improve plans and systems.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS)

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start provides Head Start programming with adaptations to meet the specific needs of migrant and seasonal farm worker families. The MSHS provides services to infants (as young as six weeks of age) and toddlers and their families as well as pre-school age children and their families. Grantees in 33 states serve over 30,000 migrant children.

Mission and Vision

Research has shown that successful teams have a clearly stated, understood, and followed mission and vision. The Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program mission and vision can be found at the program's website: www.specialquest.org. Communities are encouraged to develop a vision for inclusive services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. A clear sense of purpose and long-range vision guide their efforts and help them to keep their "eyes on the prize."

Natural Environments

The 1997 revision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) focused on providing early intervention services in natural environments. Such environments are in places, with people, and in activities where infants and toddlers without disabilities are cared for, play, grow, and learn. Natural environments are places that include regular daily routines such as eating and playing. Intervention occurs with the family in the home and across environments like Child Care and Early Head Start/Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs. The intent of the law is to ensure that children receive services, which occur in familiar environments and with familiar people, so that intervention can be embedded in and repeated throughout the child's daily living activities. Intervention that occurs in this manner has a greater effect on the child's development than therapy provided in isolation.

Part C

Part C refers to the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004. The purpose of this federal program is to provide support for each state "to develop and implement a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families" (20 USC 1433).

Preferences and Priorities

Every family has a set of priorities related to activities, services, materials, etc., that assist them in providing the best environment for their child's growth and development. When family priorities are discussed, supports can be targeted to ensure that intervention is meaningful and fits into the daily routines of the family. Preferences are reflective of cultural views. Honoring these preferences is consistent with honoring cultural diversity. Learning about and respecting family preferences and priorities provides opportunities for responsive early intervention services.

Problem Solving

Problem solving is a critical activity in each stage of the SpecialQuest Continuous Improvement Process. Addressing challenges faced by families of infants and toddlers with disabilities, programs and communities requires creative, responsive and collaborative teamwork.

Proud Moments

Proud Moments are successes that communities have realized in moving toward their vision of high quality, inclusive services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. It is important for communities to celebrate these accomplishments.

Reflections

Reflection allows time for integrating new learning experiences into our practice. Reflection refers to making time to slow down our thought processes and become aware of our assumptions and actions. Reflecting on what is heard at SpecialQuest trainings enables participants to share their thoughts and Ideas to Consider with colleagues and is an integral part of the SpecialQuest Continuous Improvement Process.

SpecialQuest

SpecialQuests are 3-day, intensive, interactive and engaging learning experiences for teams from Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (EHS/MSHS) Programs. The teams are composed of EHS/MSHS staff, families of infants and toddlers with disabilities, and their Early Intervention, Child Care and Head Start partners. Teams participate in one SpecialQuest per year for four years.

SpecialQuest Online

An innovative, Internet-based environment that allows the SpecialQuest community to Continue their Quest for inclusive practices through discussion, resource sharing, problem-solving, and professional development.

www.specialquestonline.org

Sustainability

Sustainability relates to a systemic change in practice that leads to meaningful program progress and growth. A change is sustained when all elements of a practice are fully implemented, there is a process for ongoing evaluation/continuous improvement, and the change has remained in place with high quality for a period of time.