

SpecialQuest^{birth-five}

SpecialQuest Birth–Five: Head Start/Hilton Foundation Training Program Vision

States and local communities, including Early Head Start and Head Start programs and their community partners, collaborate to provide high-quality, inclusive services for young children with disabilities and their families. This work is supported by embedding the SpecialQuest approach, materials, and resources into professional development and service systems.

History: SpecialQuest Birth–Five builds upon ten years of work by the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program (1997–2007). The SpecialQuest approach to professional development on inclusion was implemented with over 500 Early Head Start/Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and their community partners. These SpecialQuest teams participated in long-term, interactive learning experiences, using a skill-building curriculum and on-site follow-up support provided by Learning Coaches. Continuous improvement processes guided program development and provided summative evaluation information.

Approach: SpecialQuest is designed to touch the “head, heart and hands” of families and professionals working together to create inclusive communities for young children with disabilities. This relationship- and team-based approach enhances and sustains inclusive services, family leadership skills, and integrated, collaborative service delivery. Teams participate in intensive and engaging learning experiences which use parallel process and continuous improvement strategies. In addition, teams are supported with coaching, facilitation, and follow-up over time to implement high quality inclusive services.



The Quest Continues

“[SpecialQuest] has given my program a blueprint for implementing responsive services for children and families. We have expanded from looking at training direct staff to looking at the program itself... This new approach is really making an impact in [our state].”

Funded by the Office of Head Start, Grant #90YC0190. SpecialQuest Birth–Five is a special project of the Napa County Office of Education, in collaboration with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Goal: The goal of SpecialQuest Birth–Five is to create welcoming, supportive, and inclusive communities for young children with disabilities and their families across the country, with a specific focus on improving practices in Early Head Start and Head Start Programs. SpecialQuest Birth–Five will:

- **Support and expand the SpecialQuest Community, including**
 - Over 500 SpecialQuest graduate teams across the nation
 - Over 70 SpecialQuest Ambassadors
 - 10 SpecialQuest State Leadership Teams, implementing cross-systems early childhood professional development for inclusion by incorporating the SpecialQuest approach and materials into their state professional development systems: **Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wyoming**
- **Support the use of the SpecialQuest approach, materials, and resources through**
 - The SpecialQuest Multimedia Training Library (English & Spanish) available online
 - Opportunities for the SpecialQuest Community to share lessons learned and innovations, particularly in relation to family leadership, transition, birth–five populations and use of the approach and materials by faculty
 - An interactive website providing networking opportunities, topical discussion forums, stories from families of young children with disabilities and those who provide services to them, and a searchable resource bank for sharing practical tools and linkages focused on inclusion

Visit www.specialquest.org for more about SpecialQuest Birth–Five information, resources, and activities of the SpecialQuest Community.

