



## Using the SpecialQuest Approach: A Self-Assessment Guide for Designing In-Service Professional Development

SpecialQuest<sup>birth-five</sup>

# In-Service Guide

### **Purpose:**

This self-assessment provides guidance to those designing in-service professional development for inclusion using the SpecialQuest approach. This is a team-based self-assessment tool used to determine the extent to which the core components and essential elements of the SpecialQuest approach are incorporated into professional development opportunities. The value of the tool lies in the discussions and changes sparked by the self-assessment process.

### **Note:**

This guide is a supplement to the full description of the SpecialQuest approach and should be used in tandem with that document. The document, *The SpecialQuest Approach to Professional Development on Inclusion for Young Children with Disabilities and their Families*, is available on the web-based SpecialQuest Multimedia Training Library approach page at [www.specialquest.org](http://www.specialquest.org).

### **Instructions:**

1. After becoming familiar with the SpecialQuest approach, the team designing professional development should read through the considerations and discuss each of the 13 elements in relation to their professional development efforts.
2. The team then rates, for each element, the extent to which the SpecialQuest approach is being incorporated into professional development activities: not yet, partially, fully.
3. Notes can be made in the comments box to provide:
  - a. examples of how each element of the approach is evident in the professional development activities and
  - b. ideas for infusing or strengthening the elements in the professional development activities.
4. Upon completion, the team should discuss the reflection questions at the end of this guide.
5. The team should periodically use this guide for on-going planning, reflection, and refinement of professional development activities.  
*(Tip: use a different color ink to record ratings and notes each time the tool is used.)*

### **Support:**

For more information or for support applying the SpecialQuest approach to professional development for inclusion:



- contact Sandy Tradewell ([sandy.tradewell@specialquest.org](mailto:sandy.tradewell@specialquest.org))
  - explore the approach page of the web-based SpecialQuest Multimedia Training Library at [www.specialquest.org](http://www.specialquest.org)
  - engage in dialogue with the SpecialQuest community and staff to
    - share ideas about using the SpecialQuest approach and
    - discuss challenges to incorporating the approach into in-service professional development.
- (Go to [www.specialquest.org](http://www.specialquest.org), select “networking”, select “discussions”, select “register or login” and follow instructions.)

Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# COMPONENT: VALUES

ELEMENTS	CONSIDERATIONS	RATING			COMMENTS
		Not Yet	Partially	Fully	
<b>Vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is professional development based on a shared vision for inclusion, which incorporates the concepts of belonging, families as partners and leaders, and teaming and collaboration?</li> </ul>				
<b>Team-based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are participants engaging with one another in cross-agency teams?</li> <li>• Are cross-agency teams comprised of key stakeholders, including family members and direct service providers, and administrators, reflecting diverse roles, cultures, languages and abilities?</li> <li>• Do teams have support from administrators to participate in professional development, implement learning, and engage in the process of continuous improvement?</li> </ul>				
<b>Relationship-based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are positive and supportive relationships fostered among team members and facilitators?</li> <li>• Are interactions characterized by a sense of acceptance, respect, and trust?</li> <li>• Are individuals valued for their diverse experiences and perspectives?</li> </ul>				

# COMPONENT: **VALUES**, *continued*

ELEMENTS	CONSIDERATIONS	RATING			COMMENTS
		Not Yet	Partially	Fully	
<b>Families as Partners and Leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are families actively involved as informed decision-makers, participants, partners, and leaders?</li> <li>• Do families' experiences ground all aspects of professional development in the context of daily family life?</li> </ul>				
<b>Parallel Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do providers of professional development model the core values that they are expecting the participants to adopt?</li> </ul>				
<b>Head, heart, hands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does professional development address and weave together cognitive, skillbased, and emotional (motivational/inspirational) aspects of learning?</li> </ul>				
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do planning and implementation of professional development incorporate ongoing participant input, data-based decisions, and wisdom of the field?</li> <li>• Does professional development support reflective practice; providing periodic opportunities to pause and reflect on personal experiences, the context, and implications of new ideas and concepts when applying knowledge to practice in order to create and sustain change?</li> </ul>				

# COMPONENT: DESIGN

ELEMENTS	CONSIDERATIONS	RATING			COMMENTS
		Not Yet	Partially	Fully	
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do content and learning strategies have a consistent and logical organization and flow?</li> <li>• Are learning environments structured to best support active learning, and address diverse learning styles and modalities, as well as participant comfort?</li> <li>• Do learning activities and environments encourage creativity of participants and facilitators?</li> <li>• Are participants provided with open access to professional development materials and strategies, and encouraged to use them with others?</li> </ul>				
<b>Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do pacing and duration of professional development provide multiple opportunities for participants to internalize information, deepen understanding, and develop and refine skills over time?</li> <li>• Is time within professional development activities semi-structured to ensure a balance of content, practice, and reflection, as well as individual and group learning?</li> </ul>				
<b>Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are expectations for learning and behavior made explicit in the form of agendas, learning outcomes, and follow-up?</li> <li>• Are participants provided with information and skills that directly relate to their work and are expected to utilize and share information with others?</li> <li>• Do team members share responsibility and accountability for implementing action plans?</li> </ul>				
<b>Facilitation</b>	<p>Do facilitators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide learning experiences that create a shared context, ensure opportunities for practice, and support direct application to the teams' work?</li> <li>• include and elicit a variety of personal experiences and real life examples of successful inclusive practices to educate, motivate, and inspire?</li> <li>• build on the strengths of the participants, support accomplishment of learning outcomes, and celebrate successes?</li> <li>• individualize intensive, interactive, and engaging learning experiences for participants?</li> </ul>				

# COMPONENT: DESIGN, *continued*

ELEMENTS	CONSIDERATIONS	RATING			COMMENTS
		Not Yet	Partially	Fully	
<b>Applicaton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do individuals and teams reflect on their learning and how it applies to their work?</li> <li>• Do participants use problem-solving strategies to develop and implement action plans that address the challenges and realities of their work environments?</li> </ul>				
<b>Follow-up &amp; Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are teams supported through ongoing, individualized coaching over time to implement their action plans?</li> <li>• Do teams incorporate the principles of sustainability into their practice to assure long-term systems change?</li> </ul>				

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

As a team, reflect on this self-assessment process and use the following statements to guide your insights and discussion.

 What are our strengths and where are the opportunities for improvement?

 What action do we want to take?