

First Steps Provider Experiences with the EIT Model – 2012 Survey Results

Background

In 2008, the Office of Special Education (OSE) initiated a movement to a transdisciplinary team approach for the delivery of First Steps services, otherwise known as the Early Intervention Team (EIT) model, in order to:

- organize providers as efficiently as possible,
- reduce the number of times the family has to tell their “story,”
- utilize a model that emphasizes how young children learn, and
- recognize that families’ form a close relationship with a primary provider.

The movement to the EIT model was included in the System Point of Entry (SPOE) contract in 2009, with a requirement to design a regional plan for teams. In 2010, the EIT implementation plan for each SPOE was reviewed in accordance with contract requirements and approved by OSE. Since then, First Step providers have attended regional trainings on the EIT model conducted by the First Steps Area Directors. These trainings consisted of topics ranging from EIT logistics, team collaboration, Routines-Based Interview (RBI), quality home visits, Primary Provider, Joint Visits and other aspects of implementing an EIT model.

Objective

The purpose of the Provider survey was to acquire an understanding of providers’ experiences and practices regarding the adoption of the EIT model. The questions from the survey were taken from various definitions and components of the EIT model. The survey results are being used to determine what is and what is not working throughout the state regarding the EIT model. Additional regional trainings and targeted technical assistance to the SPOEs and EITs will occur as a result of the survey findings.

Sample

A request to complete the survey was sent to 1,162 First Steps providers enrolled in First Steps with at least one of the following disciplines: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech/Language Pathology, and Special Instruction. The following chart breaks down the number of providers who received the survey:

Provider Disciplines	Number	Percentage
Speech/Language Pathology	419	36%
Special Instruction	327	28%
Occupational Therapy	229	20%
Physical Therapy	182	16%
Speech/Language Pathology & Special Instruction	4	-
Occupational Therapy & Special Instruction	1	-
Total	1,162	100%

Methodology

Survey consisted of 31 questions. The introduction asked questions about the provider’s discipline, length of time practicing the discipline and length of time on an EIT. There were three categories of questions on Primary Provider, Supporting Provider and EIT. Responses were collected in a Likert scale fashion using Not True, Somewhat True or True. One category of questions on Training/technical assistance with Not True or True and one category of open-ended questions about aspects to change or other comments on the provider’s EIT experience.

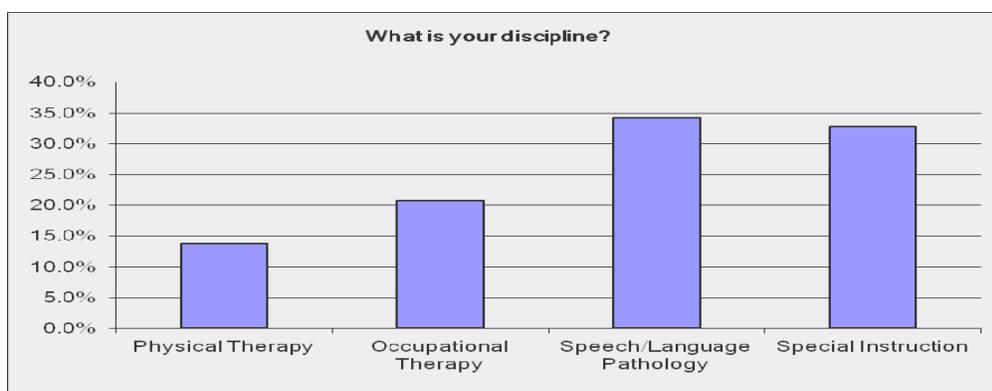
Survey Monkey was utilized to disseminate the survey and collect responses. The survey was open from October 24, 2012 to November 16, 2012.

Response Rate

There were 533 of 1,162 providers who responded to the survey (46% response rate).

Speech/Language Pathology led with 34% of the respondents, followed closely by Special Instruction with 32% of the respondents. Occupational Therapy had 21% and Physical Therapy had 13%.

Both Special Instruction and Occupational Therapy had a larger percentage in the response rate than the expected rate (SI = 28% sent, 32% response; OT=20% sent, 21% response).



Response Summary – Questions about the EIT

There were 499 of 533 providers who responded to questions about the use of an EIT model (94% of the respondents).

Answer Options	Not True	Somewhat	True	Total
Has a sufficient number of providers per discipline to cover the children assigned.	115 23%	196 39%	188 38%	499
Has reduced the number of times a family has to tell their “story”.	146 29.5%	235 47.5%	115 23%	496
Has allowed for a comprehensive collaborative approach to serving children and families.	81 16.5%	254 51%	161 32.5%	496
Has allowed for collaboration with Ancillary Providers during EIT meetings, when appropriate.	102 20.5%	211 42.5%	184 37%	497
Has worked together at all levels to support the child and family.	70 14%	238 48%	188 38%	496
Has ensured services are provided according to the IFSP.	40 8%	178 36%	277 56%	495

Response Summary – Questions about the Primary Provider

There were 488 of 533 providers who responded to questions about the use of a Primary Provider (92% of the respondents).

Answer Options	Not True	Somewhat	True	Total
I am comfortable asking questions and receiving feedback at EIT meetings.	29 6%	83 16%	374 78%	486
I understand when I need to ask for additional support from the EIT members.	19 4%	69 14%	396 82%	484
I am comfortable carrying out strategies suggested by the EIT members.	47 10%	193 40%	245 50%	485
I submit names of children to discuss at EIT meetings.	79 16.5%	115 24%	284 59.5%	478
I use Incremental Decision Making during IFSP meetings to determine the level of support needed for myself, the child and family.	75 15.5%	171 36%	232 48.5%	478
I ask questions of the Supporting Provider for both my own knowledge as well as the family's benefit.	16 3%	72 15%	397 82%	485
I establish rapport with the families I serve.	3 1%	16 3%	468 96%	487
I am aware of the learning styles of the adults in the child's life.	7 1.5%	78 16%	401 82.5%	486
My interactions are responsive to the family's learning styles.	6 1%	58 12%	423 87%	487
I am aware of the family's changing circumstances, priorities and needs.	3 1%	49 10%	434 89%	486
I participate in IFSP meetings for the children and families I serve.	16 3%	97 20%	375 77%	488
I share outside resources and supports with the family, when appropriate.	5 1%	42 9%	438 90%	485

Response Summary – Questions about the Supporting Provider

There were 481 of 533 providers who responded to questions about the use of a Supporting Provider (90% of the respondents).

Answer Options	Not True	Somewhat	True	Total
I am participating with the Primary Provider throughout the joint visit.	29 6%	117 24.5%	333 69.5%	479
I provide intervention strategies to the Primary Provider and the family.	18 4%	59 12%	404 84%	481
I use modeling techniques to support the Primary Provider and family.	19 4%	53 11%	406 85%	478
I provide feedback to the Primary Provider and family.	16 3.5%	50 10.5%	412 86%	478
I participate in IFSP meetings for the children and families I serve.	19 4%	112 23.5%	347 72.5%	478

Response Summary – Open-ended Questions

There were three open-ended questions that gave respondents an opportunity to provide feedback in their own words. The following are examples of the responses received:

1. If you could change one thing about EIT what would it be?

- To be able to change the Primary Provider based on the child's changing needs.
- To be able to collaborate more with Ancillary Providers.
- To be able to have the option of not conducting joint visits every time two providers are used.
- To be able to have the option of using the EIT model; it doesn't fit for all families, especially those children that are very involved.

2. Please share additional comments you would like us to know about your experiences with EIT.

- Concerns expressed that Special Instructors are chosen as the Primary Provider more than other disciplines.
- Concerns expressed that it is hard to make recommendations when a provider has not seen the child.
- Concerns expressed that it is a challenge to schedule joint visits.
- Concerns expressed that there is a lack of consistency among SPOEs on how the model should operate.
- Concerns expressed that some providers feel they are asked to practice outside of their disciplines.
- Concerns expressed that providers have had a decrease in income due to the EIT model.

3. On what aspects of EIT would you like more information?

- A need for more training on how to conduct a joint visit.
- A request to review evidence that the EIT model is beneficial to children and their families.
- A request for more information on coaching.
- A request for more information on how to be an effective team.

Conclusions

Overall, when asked about the use of the EIT model, the majority of providers who responded said it is working "somewhat." However, when asked about the use of the Primary Provider and Supporting Provider in the EIT Model, the majority of providers indicated "true," that they are using the activities related to these components when delivering services.

There were specific comments made about the use of joint visits, ancillary providers, service decisions and a desire to have more information/research on the use of a team model.

Consideration will be given to these responses in the development of future regional trainings and targeted technical assistance as a result of this survey.