

The Use of Project ECHO™ to Support Early Childhood Professionals in Using Strategies from the Early Start Denver Model

Sarah Zlatkovic¹, Wendy Warren¹, Canyon Hardesty¹, Shira Kern¹, Haley Sturges¹, Ethan Dahl¹, Eric Moody¹, Elizabeth Griffith²

¹Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY ²Children's Hospital Colorado, Aurora, CO

Training on strategies from the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) was delivered to the UW ECHO in Autism network from October 2018 through January 2019. Sessions were open to all interested education and early childhood professionals. 67 attendees participated in the sessions, and 11 participants were selected to participate in a research cohort. The members of the cohort were required to attend at least 7 of the 8 ECHO sessions, present a case to the ECHO community on their implementation of the ESDM strategies, respond to weekly surveys on strategy use and confidence, and complete a research interview at the end of the academic year to reflect on their experience.

Early Start Denver Model

The Early Start Denver Model is an evidence-based intervention for young children with autism that increases social-emotional, cognitive, and language abilities. ESDM combines behavioral strategies (Pivotal Response Training), with a developmental, relationship-building approach. Learning is woven into daily life and play activities.

While the strategies can be applied in many settings, including at home, clinic, or in schools, training for providers in more rural areas can be challenging due to many logic barriers, including lack of providers, training opportunities, and distance to a clinic site.

ESDM Strategies

- 1 Follow child interests, including giving choices, to get them motivated in an activity/interaction.
- 2 Take turns in the activities being the “leader” and the “follower”.
- 3 Develop routines that have a theme, variations, and elaborations, and a clear closing.
- 4 Provide multiple opportunities for varied child communication in each activity.
- 5 Deliver clear antecedents to allow for multiple learning opportunities in each activity.
- 6 Reinforce the target skill, including child approximations.



ECHO Model

Project ECHO™ is a lifelong learning and guided practice model that exponentially increases workforce capacity to provide the application of best practices. The heart of the ECHO model is its hub-and-spoke knowledge-sharing networks, led by expert teams who use multi-point videoconferencing to conduct learning sessions about evidence-based practices, and support their implementation through case-based discussion.

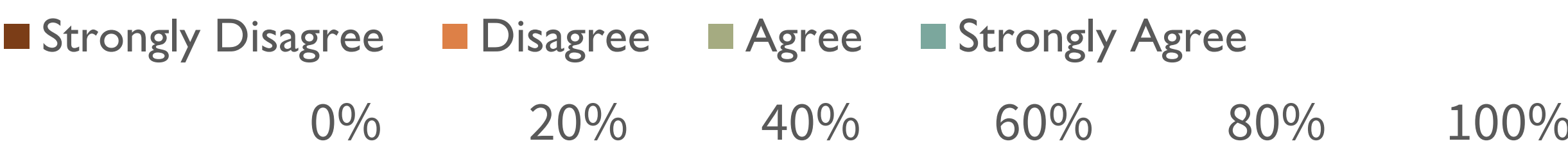


Curriculum

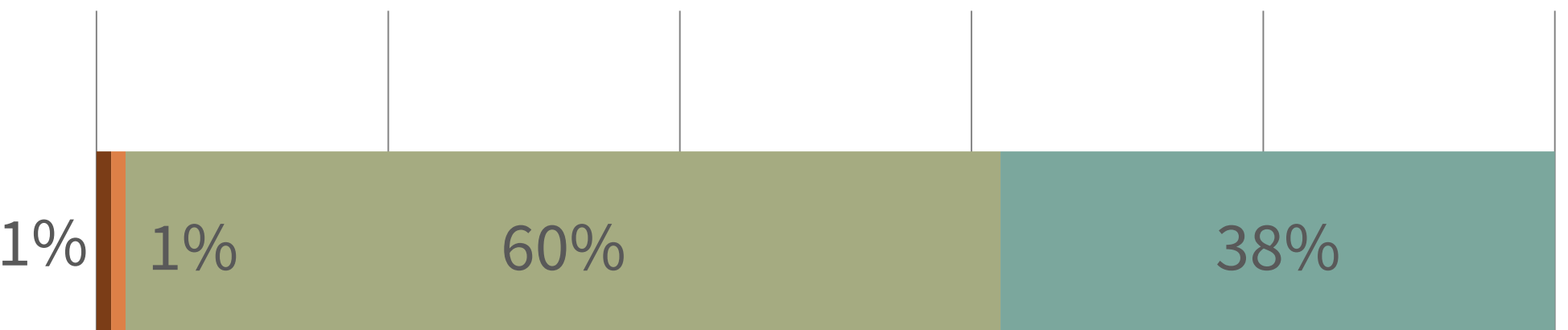
Session Topic

- 1 Strategies of Early Start Denver Model
- 2 Early Autism & Identifying Teaching Targets
- 3 Approaching Young Children with Autism & Motivation
- 4 Reciprocal Relationships
- 5 Building Routines With and Without Toys
- 6 Elaborated Reciprocal Routines
- 7 Teaching Inside of Routines Using 3-Term Contingency
- 8 Teaching While Addressing Unwanted Behaviors

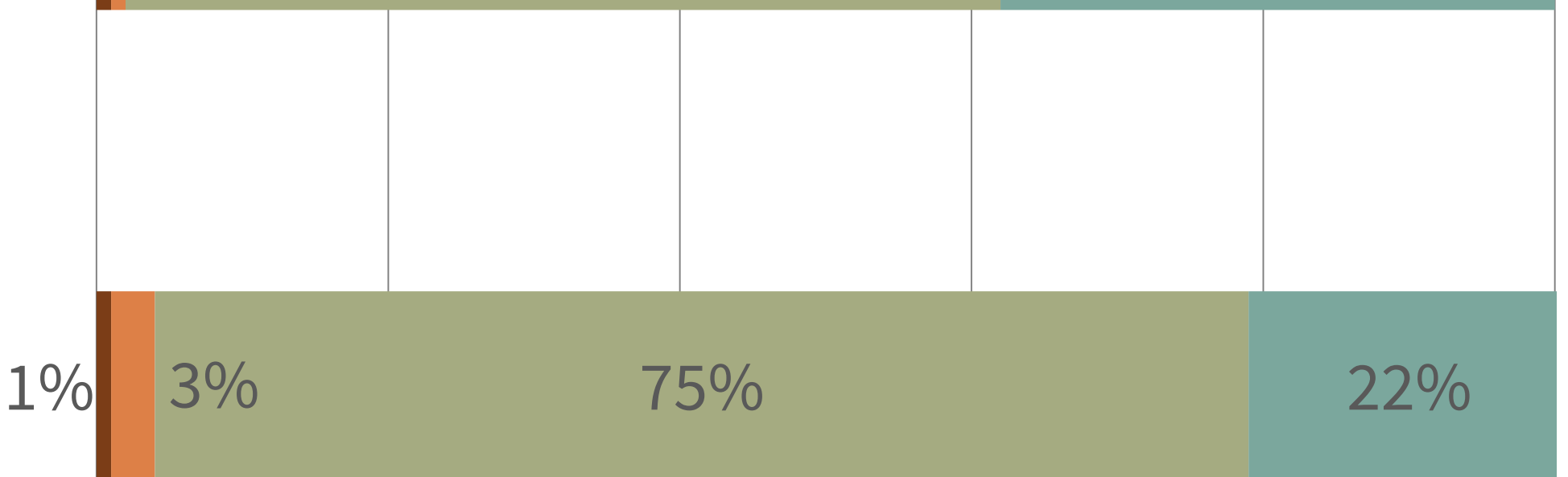
Session Ratings



“Overall, I am satisfied with today’s session.”



“Today’s session has contributed to my understanding of the Early Start Denver Model strategies.”



Research Outcomes

Rapid utilization of new skills
Confidence using new skills
Improvements seen in children



11 research participants



32 weekly strategy use and confidence surveys



Post intervention interview

Research Cohort Interview Findings

- Appreciated ease of access and cost-reduction benefits of the ECHO model.
- Participants agreed widely that the ESDM strategies are effective for working with children.
- Most participants reported using ESDM strategies with all children, not just those diagnosed with ASD.
- Participants implemented recommendations from their case presentations and saw improvements in the children.
- Participants were confident in their ability to be a resource to other professionals wanting to use ESDM strategies.
- Participants reported sharing the ESDM concepts with other professionals in their center, their children’s parents, and their own family and friends.
- Are looking forward to additional ESDM training in the future!

Participants began using strategies 1.5 to 4 weeks after learning. Frequency of use increased over time.

Participants felt confident in their use of the strategies approximately 3 weeks after learning. Confidence ratings increased over time

Average Weekly Use of Strategies

