

Ohio Parent Mentor
Project

2013

The mission of Ohio Parent Mentors is to provide the necessary support and resources to families of children with disabilities and the professionals who serve them.

2012-2013 School Year Summary Report



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Total number of projects: 71
Number of State funded projects: 47
Number of Federal Part B funded projects: 24
Number of Parent Mentors: 93

This summary report is compiled to show the collective data gathered over the course of the school year by the Parent Mentor to effectively carry out the mission and vision of the Parent Mentor project.

Data Summary

The total number of projects represents State and Local school districts and Educational Service Centers. Of the 71 projects 46 are Local Educational Agencies, 23 are Educational Service Centers and 2 are State Schools (Ohio School for the Deaf and the Ohio School for the Blind).

Number of families (unduplicated) served 16,660

Number of parent/student contacts (duplicated)	62,327 (monthly average = 5,194)
Number of school contacts (duplicated)	71,825 (monthly average = 5,985)
Number of agency contacts (duplicated)	67,306 (monthly average = 5,609)

Number of ETRs attended by parent mentors	1,753 (monthly average = 146)
Number of IEP meetings attended by parent mentors	3,265 (monthly average = 272)
Number of "other" meetings that parent mentors attended	9,071 (monthly average = 756)

Number of participants who attended parent mentor-sponsored trainings	30,855 (monthly average = 2,571)
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Number of newsletters/bulk mailings distributed	456,503 pieces
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Number of Web site "hits" (Note: Not every project has a Web site, and for those that do, not all Web sites have a "hit" counter.)	54,975
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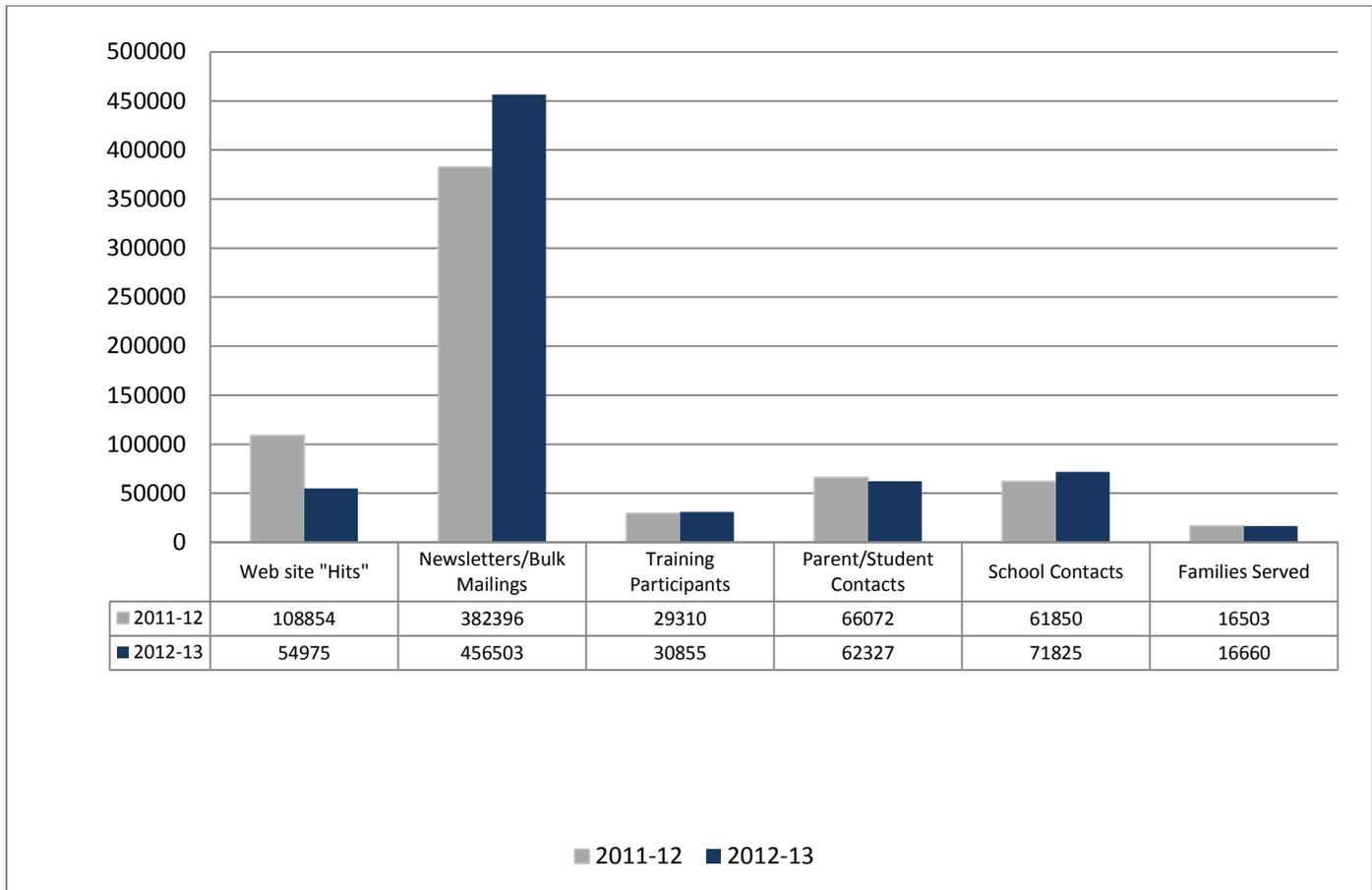
Number of Media contacts which has included: Facebook, Twitter, Television/Radio, Electronic Billboards, Social Networks, Newspaper	13,662
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Number of workshops and conferences attended by parent mentors	1,376
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What the Data Shows

When comparing data from the 2011-2012 school years to the 2012-2013 school year:

- The number of families (unduplicated) served **increased by 157**.
- The number of parent/student contacts, school contacts (duplicated counts) **decreased by 3,745**.
- The number of participants who attended parent mentor-sponsored trainings **increased by 1,545**.
- The number of newsletters/bulk mailings distributed **increased by 74,107**.
- The number of Web site "hits" **decreased by 53,879**.



Parent Mentor services are a valuable asset to school districts and families and without the support, services and training benefits sponsored and provided by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) it would not be as strong and effective of a program.

The purpose of the Parent Mentor Program is to help parents of children with disabilities effectively navigate the educational system in partnership with school districts personnel. This is accomplished by providing information and support to families and by creating a mechanism to convey the family perspective to school district officials.

Parent Mentors are required to be employed at a minimum of .5 full time equivalency (FTE). The following data shows we have:

- 65 “part-time” parent mentors and,
- 28 “full - time” parent mentors.

Parent Mentors work an average of 6 to 45 hours per week and offer services free of charge.

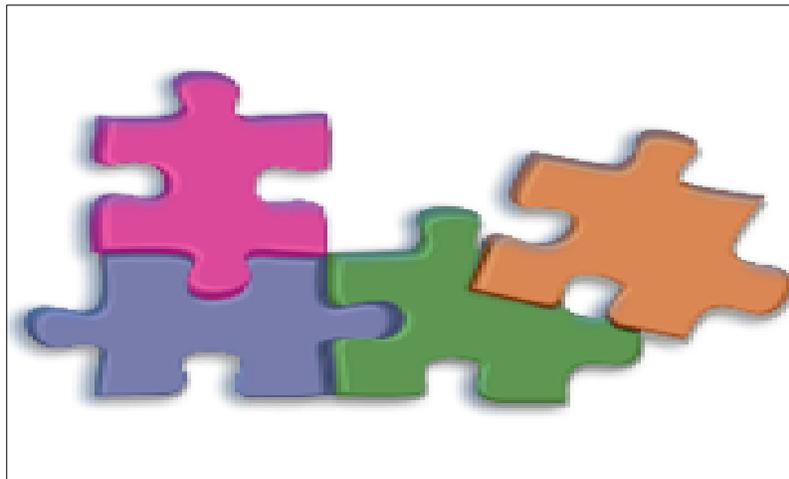
For our 2013 project summary, parent mentors were asked to list one or two new ideas for their parent mentor project that would work toward the goals that their district or ESC had set? Here are some of those responses:

- We are working on creating a more efficient way for me to reach out to parents electronically.
- Increase parent involvement/participation in their child's education by offering local training opportunities.
- Start a Parent Support network for families of children who are visually impaired, particularly for parents new to the special education world. Network would meet several times a year to meet the needs of those participating (guest speakers, etc.).
- We plan to continue to work with the district transition coordinators in the fall of 2013 to continue to improve parent involvement in the transition process.
- Continuing the Transition Expo and Information workshops on IEP, RTI, ETR process.
- The Parent Mentor Program will continue to look for opportunities to educate parents on Graduation Requirements and 3rd grade Reading Guarantee.
- Working on promoting the Parent Mentor project using technology to encourage more collaborative parent involvement
- I would like to provide more opportunities for parent trainings, either webinars or in-person speakers to increase parent knowledge and positive involvement in their child's education.
- I would like to incorporate pod casts on special education topics for families that would be linked to the Parent Mentor web site. Informed parents result in better outcomes for their children.

Each year Ohio Parent Mentors are ask to look at the current funding structure and briefly describe what changes would need to be made for those some of their ideas to be implemented? Here are Each year Ohio Parent Mentors are ask to look at the current funding structure and briefly describe what changes would need to be made for those some of their ideas to be implemented? Here are some responses out of 93 Parent Mentor responses: 14 of those responses indicated a need for additional funding; 7 of the 93 responses indicated they are able to work within the current funding structure without a need for additional funding.

Most of the Parent Mentor projects operate with a budget of \$25,000, some less. In Ohio a few of our larger urban districts that have parent mentor projects receive more and have two or more parent mentors. Many of our projects that only receive the \$25,000 have more than one parent mentor. Funds can be used for salaries and benefits, supplies, resources, equipment and administrative cost.

- Engage more community partners to assist in distributing program information.
- More families involved with the planning of events, advertising of events (esp. word of mouth and in schools, encouragement from educators for parents to attend).
- We plan to target those parents of transition age youth with special mailings and possibly meetings that specialize in transition information and options. We will collaborate with school personnel and local agencies to meet the wide variety of needs of our students.
- Get training in regards to early reading & get resources for parents. Finding and talking with different businesses within our community to give our work study students a chance to train with them.
- Districts to be on board with actively promoting educational sessions and recruiting parents for the educational sessions.
- Developing brochures and ways of distributing information about the parent mentor program.



In Ohio we have three elements that we ask Parent Mentor's to consider in regard to the Parent Mentor Grant activities. Those three elements are; 1) Processes used to implement funded activities, 2) The degree of implementation of project activities and any revisions made to approved activities; and 3) The role district leadership had in implementing project activities, including project leader involvement in the project.

The following is a sample of the responses given by parent mentors from the 2011-2012 project year on how they applied the three elements in their districts:

- In March, the Parent Mentor project hosted a **Student Award Night** the occurred at the same time as a Family Resource Fair. There were 15 local agencies that presented information to families about their programs as well as a guest speaker on Special Needs Trusts. Over 20 teachers and support staff helped to facilitate the evening and approximately 175 family members participated in the event. It was an extremely successful event that brought together agencies, school and families and was coordinated by the Parent Mentor with help from District representatives.
- **"Coffee & Dessert"** Parent - Professional Training through the Parent Mentor Program held November 8, 2012. Topic: "Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?" with presenter Sandy Brickner, OCECD. Bullying has become a great concern with some of the parents and school district staff I work with regarding children with special needs. The Directors of Student Services supported this training by encouraging both parents and school district staff to attend. They also helped distribute flyers for the "Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?" training. Additional anti-bullying resources will continue to be added to the Parent Mentor Lending Library through the Parent Mentor Grant.
- **Walk in the Shoes, A Dyslexia Simulation** was an impressive evening workshop bringing together 83 staff and parents. It was made possible with PM Grant funds plus PCSD Sp Ed funding with support from Christy Koestner, Dir. of Sp Ed. We learned people want more info about Dyslexia from the positive evaluations at the event.
- I partnered with the Special Education Director of Tri-County ESC and the State Support Team 9 to co-sponsor **trainings for parents and educators** in Ashland and Wayne Counties. This conference allows parents and educators to hear the same information regarding Special Education. All students with disabilities benefit when families and schools are speaking the same language and working together for better outcomes.
- The **Parent Support Group** met monthly and was very well attended (average 28). We had a different topic monthly and worked to meet the needs of the parents of children with disabilities. Dir. of Pupil Services and Special Education Supervisors all participated in the monthly meetings.

In regard to the Parent Mentor Grant activities, every year we ask Parent Mentors to describe the following elements: 1)What scientifically based research was used to plan the activity; 2) The degree to which activities provided and identified in your grant application is meeting or did meet the project objectives; 3)The degree of fidelity to the research model (as applicable) proposed in the approved project; and 4)The nature of stakeholder involvement in the project, to include the number of participants and the level of their participation, and the degree to which they acquire new knowledge and can demonstrate new skills as a result of participation.

- Statistics show that most parents do not know what options are available for their child with a disability after they graduate high school. **The Transition Fair** provides information to the parent and students on what some of the options are for the child after graduating. It also has different

training sessions to help these students and parents to better understand their options. Having this Transition Fair helps parents and students be aware of what resources they have, and introduces them to individuals that can help them with their plan after high school.

- According to Pacer's national Bullying Prevention Center, U.S. studies conducted on the connection between bullying and developmental disabilities found that children with disabilities were two to three times more likely to be bullied than their nondisabled peers. One study showed that 60 percent of students with disabilities reported being bullied regularly compared with 25 percent of all students. **"Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?"** training was well attended, equipping both parents and school district staff with preventive anti-bullying strategies to use with students with disabilities, as well as helpful steps to take and supports to give if the bullying had already taken place.
- **Parent Resource/Making Connections Night:** research shows that children with disabilities achieve higher levels of success if their parents/caregivers have access to professionals and resources within their district. Further, caregivers are more apt to use these resources if they meet providers. The Parent Resource/Making Connections Night introduced caregivers to resource providers, as well as the Parent Mentor and district staff (intervention specialists) to help provide access to community and agency resources as well as provide information about special education in their child's schools.
- Our **Bridges group** helps to inform parents of changes in special educations, educate parents on resources and information that is needed, and provides a way to collaborate with other parents. The more educated and informed our parents are the better decisions they can make for their child and the more involved they will be in the process. Parent involvement had increased through our group. We have had a good turnout at our meetings.

To conclude our 2011-2012 survey and data collection of the Ohio Parent Mentor's they were asked to give any added information and/or data they would like included in this summary report. We found the sampling of responses to be cumulative of our entire Parent Mentor's.

- I have been a Parent Mentor for more than five years now and the benefits to family and school districts from this program is just awesome. As a parent of a child with a disability, I truly appreciate the fact of sharing my knowledge with school districts and family's. Families are so overwhelmed by this process and having someone that knows exactly what they're going through and being able to explain the entire process, I have no doubt is a huge benefit to the special education process in Ohio. I continue to learn new information all of the time and I can't wait to share what I do learn in hope that it benefits as many as possible. Here is to continued success with the Parent Mentor Program!
- Parents are particularly appreciative in having these services and contacts made available to them. Likewise, the community agencies have benefited from this collaborative approach as they know the student well before starting service.
- We live in a rural area where there are limited services and parents who have no transportation to come to the school for meetings about their child. These parents feel very overwhelmed when there child is struggling in the classroom, whether it be academics or behavior. I have discussed this with the principals in our district and asked them to let me get in contact with these parents, just to try

and help them with understanding the referral process and how it can help their child become more successful. I find many times that when they receive a letter from the school about meeting on their child they feel the teacher or principal is mad at them for their child's problems at school. I listen to their concerns and explain the process and that they are a very valued team member, and that we work together to put interventions in place to help their child. So many times we get caught up in the paperwork and guidelines that we have to follow, that we forget that these parents are coming into a meeting with no knowledge of what is going on. I feel very blessed to be able to help the parent feel like they are on an even playing field.

- As a parent mentor I have felt so rewarded knowing that the support/help/knowledge/opportunity for parents and families are there if they just participate and seek the information.



For our 2013 project summary, district representatives were asked if having the Parent Mentor Grant impacted improvements in student outcomes. Here are some of those responses:

- The Parent Mentors have had a positive impact on student outcomes in many arenas. 100% of parents surveyed indicated that working with the Parent Mentor has helped them to better understand and participate in their child's education. Research has shown that when parents participate in their child's education outcomes for students improve. The two Parent Mentors working in Lorain and Huron counties have made a positive impact on parents within the region. If the Parent Mentors did not exist parents would be lacking in their knowledge and resources which would have a direct impact on their child's education. The Parent Mentors attend all network meetings with the special education administrators from within the region and it is through these out of district meetings that a trusting relationship is nurtured.
- I believe the positive relationship between the ESC and Angela has led to families also building positive relationships with districts. When they have concerns about their child, Angela guides them to work in partnership with the district and helps them realize the school, like them, wants only the best for their child. In addition, I believe the families and students attending our Music Therapy sessions have seen increases in language development, direction following, confidence building, and social skills such as turn taking and waiting. Some parents have learned to set disciplinary boundaries and limitations while others have learned that their children have even more capability and potential than they had realized.

- Yes, the support given to parents and families by the Parent Mentor has a positive impact on student outcomes. Parents who work with our Parent Mentor report that their children have more effective IEPs after working with her than before working with her. These same children have better outcomes and increased success when their families and schools are working together.
- The parent mentor's involvement helps guide teams to appropriate support systems for students. Her involvement produces increased communication between home and school which in turn results in better grades, increased student achievement, and appropriate services for students.
- One of the major outcomes has been that we have had no parent complaints or due process requests for the past three years. The parent mentor has provided ongoing training for the families of students with ADHD, dyslexia and autism. In addition, she has educated the families on the IEP process and they have an excellent understanding of the plans. Student outcomes have been very strong. Our district is rated excellent and our RtI process has significantly reduced the number of students who have needed special education intervention.

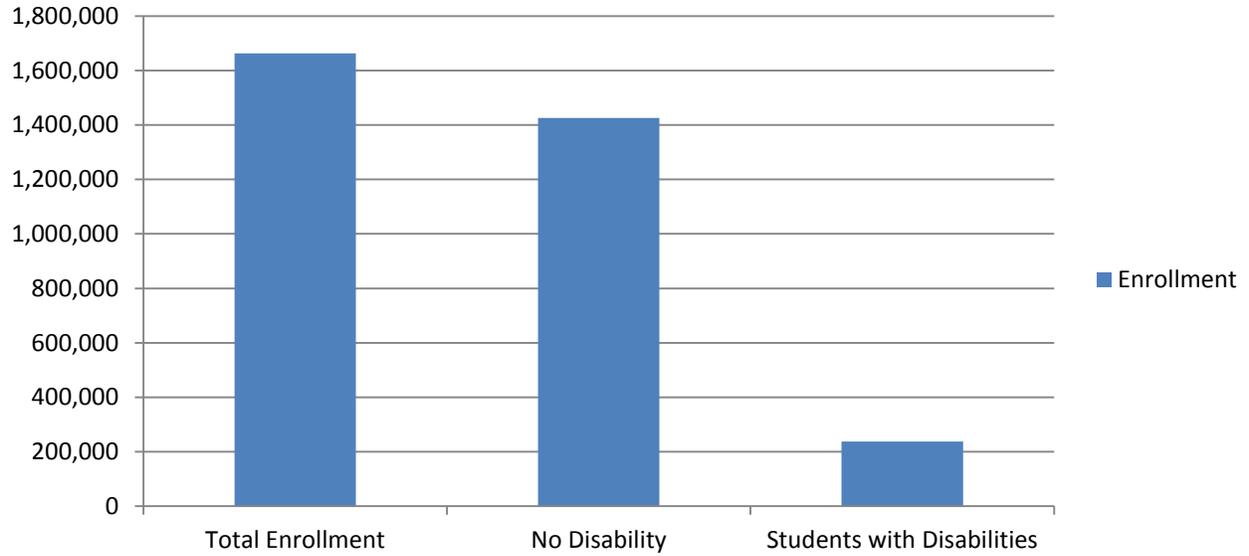
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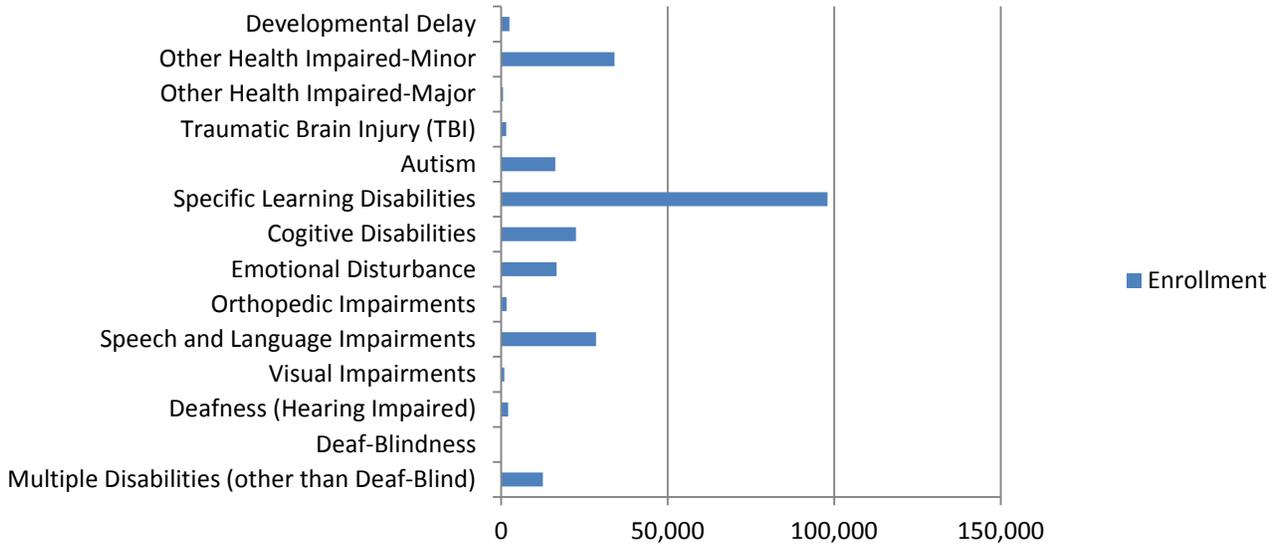
2012-13 State of Ohio Enrollment Data

Disability	Enrollment	Percent of Total Enrollment
Total Enrollment	1,663,430	100.0%
No Disability	1,425,916	85.7%
Students with Disabilities	237,514	14.3%
Multiple Disabilities (other than Deaf-Blind)	12,488	0.8%
Deaf-Blindness	37	0.0%
Deafness (Hearing Impairments)	2,084	0.1%
Visual Impairments	954	0.1%
Speech and Language Impairments	28,495	1.7%
Orthopedic Impairments	1,576	0.1%
Emotional Disturbance (SBH)	16,604	1.0%
Cognitive Disabilities	22,481	1.4%
Specific Learning Disabilities	98,010	5.9%
Autism	16,217	1.0%
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	1,532	0.1%
Other Health Impaired - Major	598	0.0%
Other Health Impaired - Minor	34,004	2.0%
Developmental Delay	2,434	0.1%

State of Ohio Enrollment



Enrollment by Disability

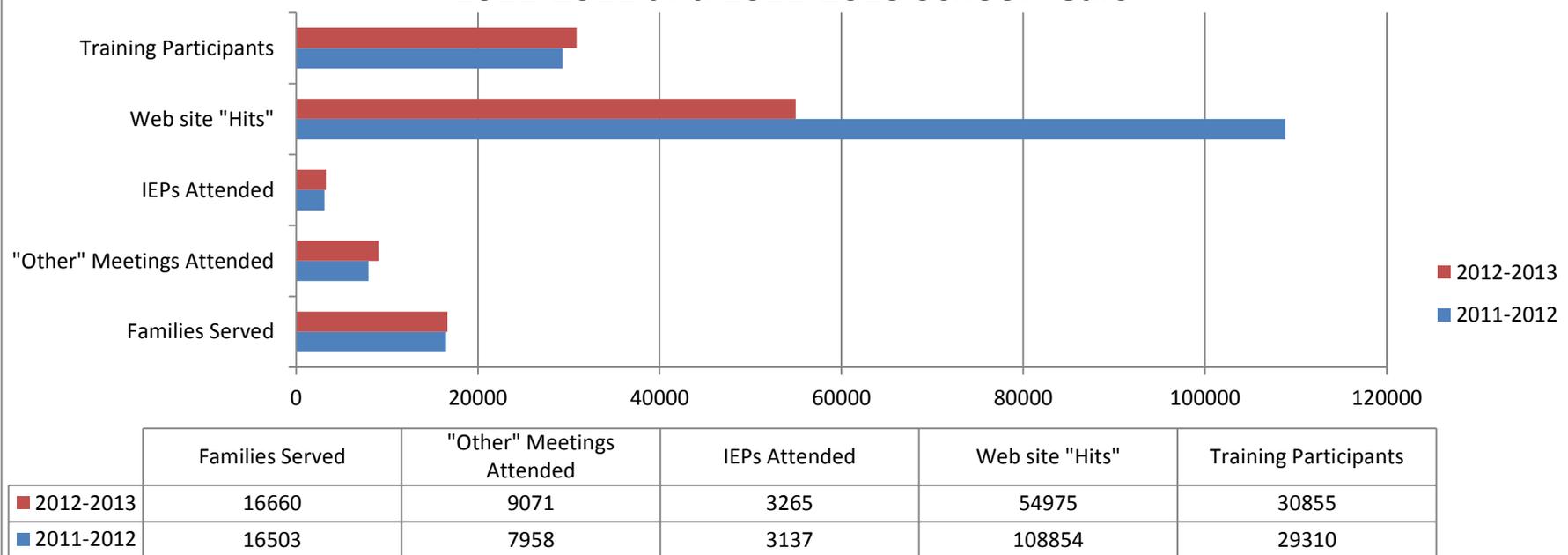




**Parent Mentor Project
Historical Data Comparison
School Year**

	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Parent/Student Contacts (duplicated)	33793	37143	42581	50119	57497	58619	57630	66,072	62,327
School Contacts (duplicated)	34,697	39,545	44,348	48,735	59,467	64,093	64,325	61,850	71,825
Agency Contacts (duplicated)	31,809	38,709	41,703	47,903	67,260	69,041	72,238	64,171	67,306
Training Participants	13,841	17,050	14,443	18,363	19,986	22,458	21,760	29,310	30,855
Newsletters/ Bulk Mailings	157,074	168,614	159,563	133,960	144,678	241,955	341,989	382,396	456,503
Web site "Hits"	13,355	32,914	26,578	17,489	108,056	85,367	100,683	108,854	54,975
Media Contacts	Data not available	21,434	13,662						
IEPs Attended	2,506	2,687	2,211	2,808	2,788	2,921	3,247	3,137	3,265
ETRs Attended	1,055	1,112	844	1,270	1,373	1,494	1,483	1,696	1,753
"Other" Meetings Attended	5,531	6,158	5,199	5,183	9,142	8,484	7,248	7,958	9,071
Child Count	92,184	105,388	Data not available	97,367	120,154	230,231	198,169	202,666	150,815
Families Served (Unduplicated)	8,580	10,035	9,314	14,094	13,008	12,274	18,504	16,503	16,660

2011-2012 and 2012-2013 School Years



NOTE

- ⌋ Not every project has a Web site, and for those that do, not all Web sites have a "hit" counter.
- ⌋ The child count total for the 2004-2005 school year does not include child count numbers from five districts.
- ⌋ From December 2007 to June 2008, ten additional parent mentor projects were funded with TANF funds.
- ⌋ The child count total for the 2011-2012 school year does not include child count numbers from all districts.
- ⌋ Media Contact is new in the 2011-2012 school year and not all projects utilize this method of contact parents, school district and/or community.
- ⌋ The child count total for the 2012-2013 school year does not include child count numbers from all districts.

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