Exploring the Role of Pediatric Occupational Therapy in Providing Services to Children with Visual Deficits

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Agency

Belmont University was a “best fit” agency to perform my E.C. project because it provided the environment and resources necessary to develop advance practice skills and explore occupational therapy’s role in providing services to children with visual deficits.

Belmont offered ample resources such as:
- Access to the library database and space to conduct research
- Access to faculty mentor and peer support
- Access to research tools such as Qualtrics® Nvivo® and SPSS®
- Access to partner agencies that serve a variety of populations in the Nashville area.

Learning Activities

- Submit an IRB application to gain ethical approval from Belmont University’s Institutional Review Board.
- Construct and administer survey material to explore the attitudes and perceptions of occupational therapist role in providing services to children with visual deficits.
- Complete thorough review of evidence-based, peer-reviewed literature that explores OT’s role in providing services to children with visual deficits.
- Attend VISUAL PROCESSING IMPAIRMENT I Workshop.
  Instructor: Mary Warren PhD, OTR/L, SCLV, FAOTA
  - Learn skills to effectively evaluate and treat visual perceptual dysfunction in adult patients following stroke and head trauma.
  - Taught how to identify deficiencies in functional impairment which are caused by visual perceptual impairment and design practical interventions which increase independence in daily occupations.
- Participate in GoBabyGo Fittings focused on vision’s role in seating and mobility.
- Develop vision-based therapy tools for OT practitioners.

Goals

- To develop advanced understanding of pediatric vision and vestibular therapy through independent research of the literature.
- To develop a survey to explore current occupational practitioner attitudes and perceptions of providing services to children with visual deficits.
- To perform a scoping review of the literature regarding pediatric vision development in anticipation for publication.
- To prepare a manuscript worthy of submission to the Journal of Occupational Therapy Education
- To collaborate with current practitioners in development of vision-based tools
- To contribute to the body of literature by analyzing the role of occupational therapy regarding pediatric vision and creating a scholarly manuscript to disseminate findings

Outcomes

- Research manuscript will be submitted to the The Journal of Occupational Therapy Education in May 2017.
- In-service presentation to share research findings to a wider occupational therapy audience.
- Development of vision-based tools/activities to be used by occupational therapists.

Research Abstract

This study explored the adequacy of educational preparation and confidence levels of occupational therapy practitioners in providing assessments and interventions to children with visual deficits. Further, this study explored practitioner’s attitudes and perceptions of their current role in providing services to children with visual deficits, as well as what they perceived is limiting their ability to provide vision-based services. A survey designed through Qualtrics®, an electronic survey system, was sent to 31 licensed occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants. Twenty participants (65%) completed the 18-question survey. Eighty-nine percent of respondents reported they feel confident in providing occupational therapy services/interventions for children with visual impairments. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents perceived that they had received adequate preparation in occupational therapy school, however both qualitative and quantitative survey data support that lack of knowledge (i.e. continuing education courses, OT education) and a sound body of evidence were primary barriers are limiting practitioner’s ability to provide vision-based services. Findings provide evidence to consider including screening, assessment, and treatment of children with visual impairments as part of curricular standards for all entry-level educational programs in the United States. Further, to provide more continuing education courses specific to the screening, assessment, and treatment of children with visual impairments.

Acknowledgements

Faculty Advisor
Dr. Teresa Plummer (PhD, MSOT, OTR/L, CAPS, CEAS, ATP)

Expert Mentor
Heidi Clapton OTR/L
Pediatric Occupational Therapist
Provides:
- Vision Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Vestibular Therapy

Sample Reference List


