



Project Description & Sites

Project Description:

The purpose of the capstone project was to acquire advance knowledge in program design and articulating best practices to aquatic staff for teaching swim lessons to children with disabilities. The components of the project were twofold: 1) to promote safety behaviors and 2) to promote active recreational behaviors that promote health and wellness. The population of individuals with disabilities are more susceptible to drowning due to elopement and wandering behaviors (Alaniz, Rosenberg, Beard, & Rosario, 2017; Levy, Ainsleigh, & Hunsinger-Harris, 2017). Individuals with disabilities often do not have the same opportunities for active recreational activities and in combination with medications that can encourage overeating, have an increased potential of being overweight or obese (Fragala-Pinkham, Haley, & O'Neil, 2011; Mische Lawson, Foster, Harrington, & Oxley, 2014). The project includes project evaluation and design, staff education, and delivery, with possible implementation of recommendations to a community-based wellness center in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Along with the main purpose of the project, the student will be identified the specialty area of aquatic therapy within the scope of occupational therapy for persons across the lifespan and engaged in research, education courses, and observation of aquatic therapy services in order to create a business plan related to consulting services for aquatic programming.

Project Sites:

YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne

- Caylor-Nickel Foundation Family YMCA
- Central Branch YMCA
- Jackson R. Lehman YMCA
- Jorgenson R. Lehman Family YMCA
- Parkview Family YMCA
- Renaissance Pointe YMCA
- Whitley County Family YMCA

Huntington University

TherapyONE at Jackson R. Lehman YMCA

Turnstone

My Autism Ally

Project Completion and Outcomes

1. Student will gain advanced knowledge of specialty area of aquatic therapy through observation, research, and certification course.
2. Student will gain leadership and administration skills by formulating a business plan for consultation service.
3. Student will gain program and policy development skills by providing recommendations for the YMCA adaptive swimming curriculum and staff education through needs assessments, environmental assessments, research, and observation.

Mission & Vision Statements

Mission Statement: To provide a community center with the educational trainings for staff and program recommendations for teaching individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities how to swim.

Vision Statement: To promote acquisition of swimming skills to prevent drowning for children with disabilities, increase participation in recreational swimming endeavors, and promote future swimming endeavors for individuals with disabilities.

Deliverables

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| 1. Completion certificate from aquatic therapy-based CEU6 course | 7. Summary of YMCA adaptive swim instructor needs assessment |
| 2. PowerPoint about aquatic occupational therapy with APA resources | 8. Summary of YMCA environmental and sensory modifications for adaptive swim lessons |
| 3. Documents outlining consultation-based business plan | Written report of YMCA recommendations based off caregiver feedback, swim instructor feedback, aquatic management staff feedback, recommendations for swim instructor education, recommendations for curriculum design, and swim instructor recommendations. |
| 4. Personal use adaptive swimming curriculum and adaptive swim instructor training manual | |
| 5. Summary of YMCA adaptive swim lesson participant caregiver needs assessment | |

Needs Assessment

Occupational Therapy Scope Needs

- Evidence-based research that supports the use of occupational aquatic therapy for populations across the lifespan.

Adaptive Swim Instructor Training Needs

- Currently available education does not provide the needed information about working with individuals with disabilities in the pool environment.

National Swimming Organization Needs

- Swimming organizations realize that many aquatics personnel are not educated on how to provide aquatic services to individuals with disabilities.
- Currently, a trend of non-inclusion in certain arenas as swimming groups, despite advocacy.

Literature Review

Recommendations for swimming curriculum

- Dosage recommendations
 - **The more time spent practicing skills, the better individuals with disabilities were at completing swim skills**
- Types of Swimming Skills
 - Foundational/Introductory
 - Play-based
 - Competitive Stroke learning

Recommendations for Swim Instructors

- Instructors with extensive swim experience require training in order to be able to work with individuals with disabilities
- Instructors with background in working with individuals with disabilities require knowledge in teaching swimming skills.



KEY REFERENCES

*Full reference list available upon request

Future Implications for OT

- Occupational therapists are able to provide aquatic therapy services to their clients across the lifespan to promote acquisition of new habits, strengthening, and sensory based goals.
- There is a unique market available for implementation of a consultation service for adaptive aquatics education and curriculum.
- Occupational therapists are uniquely fit to be able to provide education through training and coaching to aquatic facilities who wish to design adaptive swimming opportunities.