

Increasing Mealtime Participation in the Pediatric ASD Population with Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Katelyn Stout, OTDS

Huntington University Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program

Project Description & Site

The purpose of the capstone project was to enhance mealtime participation in the pediatric ASD population at Hopebridge Autism Center. At this site, clients have access to many different disciplines and therapies. This project focused on the relationship between applied behavioral therapy (ABA) and occupational therapy (OT). The main goal of this capstone project was to improve collaboration and communication between the disciplines to effectively approach mealtime in a functional way for the children to improve independence in the population.

Mission & Vision Statements

Vision Statement: To improve the site's interdisciplinary approach to mealtime.

Mission Statement: To gain advanced knowledge on routines, behaviors, and participation in the pediatric autism spectrum disorder population through a needs assessment.



Needs Assessment | Literature Review

Literature Review:

- 72% of children with ASD present with mealtime difficulties resulting in fewer nutritional foods consumed or tolerated (Schreck et al., 2004).
- The study concluded, that although the ABA intervention resulted in less behavioral problems, the OT interventions produced a greater participation time in mealtime (Peterson et al., 2016). Greater participation in occupations may indicate stronger skill development and sensory tolerance
- There are overlapping similarities between ABA and OT with goal-oriented outcomes that are centered on life-long functional independence (Welch & Poiatajko, 2017).

Needs Assessment:

- Data collection for needs assessment consisted of chart review, one-on-one interviews, and observation.
- Findings were: (a) 72% of clients had mealtime related goals that were not being addressed consistently ; (b) educational resources about best practice mealtime are not available (c)sufficient adaptive equipment for mealtime to improve independence is not readily available

Project Completion and Outcomes

- Student will complete a needs assessment with recommendations for potential program design around mealtime in the Hopebridge Pediatric population
- Student will develop potential programming to further integrate OT's role in mealtime routine at a facility with ABA therapy
- Student will develop advanced skill in facilitating professional relationships of OT staff and ABA therapy team to improve communication for mealtime related goals

Deliverables

- Formal presentation of findings in needs assessment
- Student will provide certificate of completion of one CEU course.
- Student will provide the created mealtime routine intervention program
- Student will provide progress tracking sheet used to communicate mealtime related goals between OT and ABA therapy



Future Implications for OT

- Educational materials for Registered Behavioral Technicians to improve functional approach to mealtime
- Improved adaptive mealtime equipment to improve
- Educational opportunities for parents/caregivers to understand nutritional implications in ASD population
- Improved access to nutrient dense foods through a meal program at the site
- Kitchen life skills program for pre-teen population to continue independence with mealtime needs
- Multidisciplinary meetings to discuss progress of individual clients creating a heightened team approach at clinic



KEY REFERENCES

- Peterson, K. M., Piazza, C. C., & Volkert, V. M. (2016). A comparison of a modified sequential oral sensory approach to an applied behavior-analytic approach in the treatment of food selectivity in children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 49(3), 485–511.
- Schreck, K. A., Williams, K., & Smith, A. F. (2004). A comparison of eating behaviors between children with and without autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 34, 433–438. doi:10.1023/b:jadd.0000037419.78531.86Robichaud, L., Hébert, R., & Desrosiers, J. (1993). Efficacy of a sensory integration program on behaviors of inpatients with dementia. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 48(4), 355-360.
- Welch, C. D., & Poiatajko, H. J. (2016). Applied behavior analysis, autism, and occupational therapy: A search for understanding. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 70(4), 1–5.