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Impact of COVID-19 on Occupational Therapy Service Delivery in Public Schools

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Impact of COVID-19 on Occupational Therapy Service Delivery in Public Schools

Amanda Ciccone

Occupational Therapy Services

Occupational therapy is a related service

OT's work on a variety of goals and skills so the child can be successful both in school and their daily lives

Whole child approach

- How does this skill help the child in the long run?
- EX: Table on this slide
 - Hold money
 - Open and close doors
 - Open and close jars of food
 - Carry food

Goal	Strategies/Activities
Strengthening	Crumple paper or tissue paper to fill a bag Nuts and bolts game Roll and pull taffy Build with magnets
Visual-motor/eye hand coordination	Cut shapes Make a necklace Draw with templates Lacing projects
Improve hand dominance and grasping patterns	Practice cutting Use a nuts and bolts game Lacing Stringing beads Drawing with templates and stencils



Research Questions

- (1) What short term impact did COVID have on delivery of OT services in schools?
- (2) What long term impact did COVID have on delivery of OT services in schools?
- (3) What impact does the wealth, location, and size of the district have on delivery of OT services?
- (4) What positive impacts did COVID have on delivery of OT services in schools?
- (5) What negative impacts did COVID have on delivery of OT services in schools?

Participant Selection

IRB approval

Recruitment emails were sent with consent form twice to occupational therapists within 6 districts in central Ohio

- Suburban districts w/ low student poverty rate and large student populations

13 occupational therapists agreed to an interview but 11 were included in analysis

- Had to have worked during either the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year

Data Collection and Analysis

Interview conducted and transcribed

- Questions were asked about technology, impact, challenges, positives, etc

Word frequency analysis

- Otter.ai summary keywords
- Words based on context and emotion from interview
- Words relating to occupational therapy

Results

Frequency

District Comparisons

Participant Comparison

Themes

4 Themes:

- 1) Home Life
- 2) Service Delivery
- 3) Social and/or Emotional Mindset
- 4) School Performance

Theme 1: Home Life

- Home life, resources available, ability to participate in activities
 - Parents/guardians

Theme 2: Service Delivery

- Aspects of service delivery COVID-19 affected
 - Materials/supplies
 - Difference in service delivery models

Theme 3: Social and/or Emotional Mindset

- Social and emotional aspects
 - Masks
 - Understanding emotions
 - Safety of OTs and families

Theme 4: School Performance

- How the child performs in school
 - Still focused on skills for school due to children's ages

Answers to Research Questions

Short term impact:

- Increase in evaluation referrals
- District D changed service delivery model for PreK

Positive impact:

- IEP and evaluation team meetings online
- Relationship between OT and families
- District D change in service delivery

Long term impact:

- Cannot be determined

Impact of wealth:

- Computers given out
- Less WiFi issues

Negative Impact:

- Reduction quality of service
- Effect of masks on children
- Social and/or emotional skills of children

Biggest Takeaway

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations:

- Small sample size
- Monomethod
- Human error

Future Research:

- Children in middle to high school from 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year
- Study repeated in nursing homes and senior living

Works Cited

Case-Smith, Jane, and Susan Bazyk. "School Based Occupational Therapy." *Occupational Therapy for Children*, edited by Jane Case-Smith and Jane Clifford O'Brien, Mosby/Elsevier, Maryland Heights, MO, 2010, pp. 713–743.

"Occupational Therapy." *STARS - Student Therapy and Resource Services*, 8 Oct. 2021, <https://studenttherapy.com/careers/occupational-therapy/>.

Questions?