Evaluating Occupational Therapy Role in Feeding for Pediatric Populations

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PURPOSE
- To clarify the role of occupational therapy in pediatric feeding therapy
- To identify the need for pediatric feeding therapy and resources available in the Greater Seattle Area
- To inform caregivers about the feeding therapy approach at Seattle Therapy

METHODS
- Literature Review
- Community Survey
- Caregiver Survey
- Feeding Therapy Brochure

ABOUT SEATTLE THERAPY
Seattle Therapy is a pediatric outpatient clinic with occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists that serves children from birth to age 21. They specialize in children with social-emotional challenges, sensory processing disorder, developmental delay, motor impairments, and/or cognitive delays. They provide specialized evaluation and treatment for children with feeding disorders. Challenges in the area of mealtime participation can include a limited or restricted food repertoire, difficulty sitting still, difficulty chewing and swallowing foods, and challenges with utensil use. Feeding therapy aims to help children increase their participation in mealtimes at home, at school, and in the community.

COMMUNITY TRENDS

Availability of pediatric feeding services in Seattle decreases as children age.

Feeding challenge experience

The variety of challenges reported by caregivers illustrates the complex nature of feeding.

BROCHURE CONTENTS

Needs Identified
- Prevalence of feeding challenges
  - 10-25% of all children
  - 40-70% of all premature infants
  - 70-90% of children diagnosed with CP or developmental delay
  - 80% of children with autism
- Caregiver awareness
  - Many families are unaware that their child has a clinically significant feeding issue
  - All levels of feeding challenges are associated with higher caregiver burden, impact daily family functions, and decrease quality of care

Best practice of a feeding therapy team
- Research supports a multidisciplinary team approach

Understanding different approaches
- Appropriate approach varies based on feeding challenges and remediation techniques

Brochure Content
- Common diagnoses and their related feeding challenges
- Typical feeding skill milestones

USABILITY OF RESOURCE

“Failed more information on how therapy works
- Find Mealtime Experiences Challenging
- 33%

FUTURE APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION
- Distributing brochure to primary care providers and other clinicians to use as a referral tool for pediatric feeding therapy.
- Convert to an online resource to reach larger caregiver audience and improve accessibility.
- Add more information about clinicians at Seattle Therapy and their areas of expertise related to feeding.

The brochure is aimed at educating clinicians and caregivers about feeding therapy to increase advocacy for and accessibility of feeding services for children of all ages.

REFERENCES