

Educational Sessions for Caregivers with Children with

Functional Feeding Difficulties

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“The purpose of the capstone was to increase knowledge, reduce caregiver stress, and promote social support for caregivers with children with functional feeding difficulties.”

Site Description

- Capstone project was implemented in the early intervention (EI), center-based program called, “Leaps and Bounds” at Pediatric Therapy Network (PTN) located in Torrance and Long Beach, California
- Services delivered through Regional Center for ages 18 months to three years of age
- Common diagnosis, but not limited to, developmental delays

Mission Statement: “leading the way in helping children, families and communities reach full capabilities through innovative therapy, education and research programs” (“Our Mission”, 2019)

Areas of Need

- Increased demands of growing company
- Program development for feeding difficulties
- Increased support for EI caregivers

Objectives

1. Develop and implement parent-based, educational workshops focused on feeding difficulties
2. Analyze the outcomes of parent-based, educational workshops
3. Demonstrate increased clinical knowledge towards family-centered care
4. Create a manualized deliverable for PTN

Literature Review

- **Increased caregiver stress** (Didehbhani, 2001; Kaur, 2020; Suarez et al., 2014; Volker, 2020; Wu et al., 2012)
 - Fear for child’s survival, impact on parent-child relationship, inability to cope and adjust, energy depleting
- **Benefits of groups** (Feeney & Collins, 2015; Taylor, 2011)
 - Social support with informational content, sharing similar stories, and encouragement of others demonstrated better mental health and higher levels of subjective well-being
- **Intervention education** (Benson et al., 2013; Gosa et al., 2017, Peterson et al., 2016; Reinoso et al., 2018)
 - Behavioral, oral motor, and sensory-based interventions

Program Development

- Appraised relevant evidence
- Created presentations and resource handouts for caregivers
- Developed surveys
- Implemented feeding interventions and discussed feeding concerns with caregivers

Workshops	Topics
Workshop One 8 caregivers	Role of Occupational Therapy in Feeding, Eating, Swallowing Developmental Milestones
Workshop Two 1 participant	Postural Control
Workshop Three 8 participants	Body Alignment and Sitting Posture
Workshop Four 11 participants	Parent Roles and Relationships
Workshop Five 3 participants	Oral Motor
Workshop Six 5 participants	The Sensory System

Methods

- Mixed-methods approach
 - Three open-ended questions
 - One pre and post Likert-scale question
 - Jeffrey’s Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) to analyze quantitative data

Please rate your current stress level.

When thinking about mealtime with your child, what is your stress level?

○ (1) No Stress ○ (2) ○ (3) ○ (4) ○ (5) Extremely Stressed

Moderately Stressed

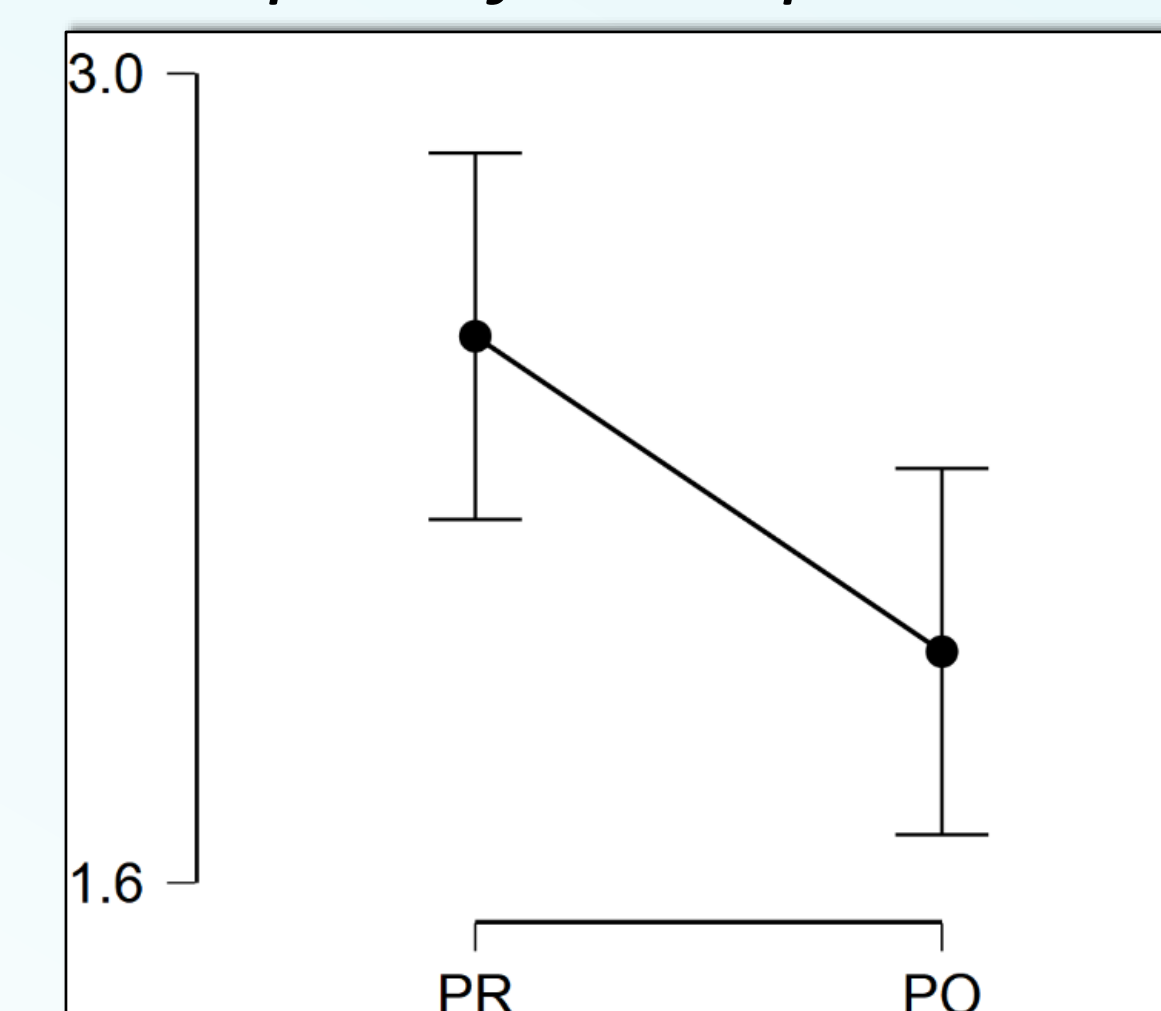
- Inclusion criteria: Caregivers required to currently have their child enrolled in Leaps and Bounds.

Quantitative Outcomes

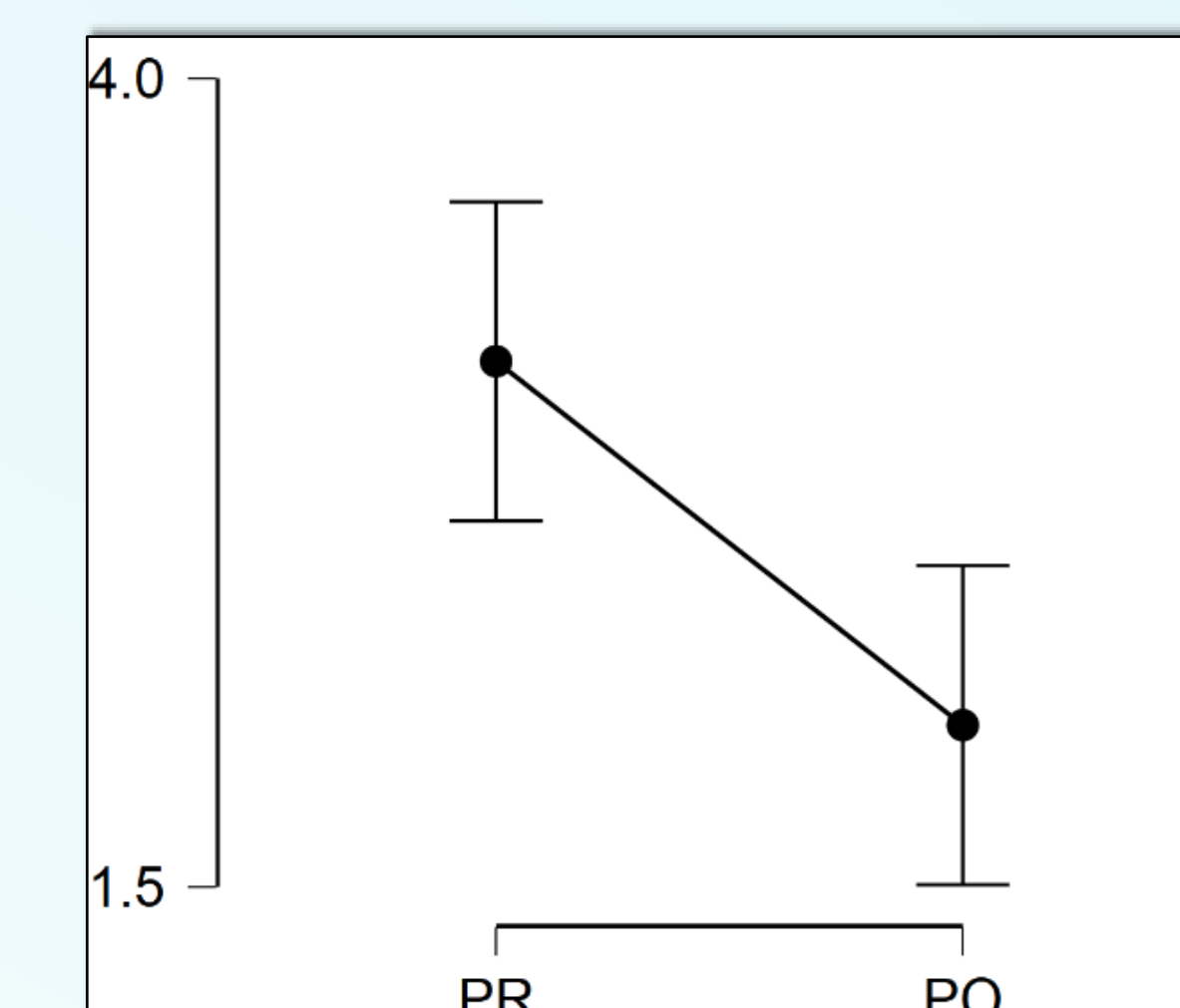
Hypothesis

After the educational workshops, caregivers will demonstrate a decrease in stress levels.

Examples of Descriptive Plots



Workshop Four
P-value: 0.0355
Effect size: 0.75



Workshop Six
P-value: 0.024
Effect size: 1

Results

After the six workshops, caregivers demonstrated a decrease in stress levels. P-values reflected significant change pre to post workshops (all P-values under 0.10). Effect sizes ranged from some to greatly effected (effect sizes ranged from 0.186 to one).

Qualitative Outcomes

Common Themes

1. Empathy Towards Child
 - a) “perspective on how my little one might feel with foods.”
- Workshop two caregiver
2. Increased Confidence with Mealtime
 - a) “feeling more confident, learning different ways to teach my child”
- Workshop four caregiver
3. Community Support
 - a) “surprised how many caregivers share similar difficulties”
- Workshop one caregiver

Conclusion

- Increased knowledge
- Decreased stress
- Increased confidence
- Increased community support
- **Scholarly deliverables:** digital file with Power Point slides and speaker notes, directions to all activities, caregiver handouts, research articles, and presented content at OT department staff meetings
- **Limitations:** small sample size, language barriers, unable to follow up with caregivers
- Future directives: rearrange workshops into a series, increase frequency of EI education for caregivers, measure transferability of skills

References available upon request.