

Teacher and Caregiver Training for Children with Sensory and Behavioral Needs

Annie Gloyn Martzell, OTDS; Faculty Mentor: Dr. Diana Gantman Kraversky, OTD, MS, OTR/L, AP

Site Mentors: Gabriela Rivera, MPH & Alma Nunez, LMFT

DCE Site: Volunteers of America, Los Angeles (VOALA)

“Helping our most vulnerable change their life stories”

- VOALA is the southern California branch of the larger, nationwide non-profit human services organization, Volunteers of America. They provide services to children, families, veterans, youth, people with drug addiction, and human trafficking survivors
- VOALA offers direct services to families of lower socio-economic status
- North Hollywood location has early Head Start and Head Start Classes, and access to home-based services

IDENTIFIED NEEDS

- Provide education to both teachers and parents/caregiver on sensory strategies, emotional regulation, and routine building
- Increase communication between teachers and caregivers
- Provide wellness strategies for both groups
- Increase awareness of OT and advocate for OT in a non-traditional setting

LITERATURE REVIEW

- A need for more research on parent/teacher training and coaching for children with sensory processing and sensory integration challenges through an OT lens (Miller-Kuhanek et al., 2018)
- The study illustrates success in using coaching as a tool for promoting self-efficacy in caregivers. A need for more parent-based coaching interventions for both individuals and as a group (Allen et al., 2021)
- Parents of children with ASD experience isolation and require more community and social support to enhance their mental health and well-being (Smith et al., 2023)

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Create, deliver and evaluate a five-week training program for caregivers and teachers of children with special needs. Primary objectives are educating on sensory needs, reducing negative behaviors in children, increasing self-efficacy for caregivers, decreasing stress for caregivers and teachers, and to improve the quality of life for child and family
- Advocate for OT in a non-traditional setting, improve clinical skills and knowledge in early intervention, and foster interprofessional collaboration

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Sensational Solutions

- A sensory and behavioral training program for teacher and caregivers of children ages zero to five with special needs
- Caregiver/Parent workshops:** Two sessions 1x week on Zoom for 1 hour
- Separate English and Spanish Workshops provided
- Teacher Workshops:** Three Sessions, 1x week in person for 45 minutes

5 Total Workshops

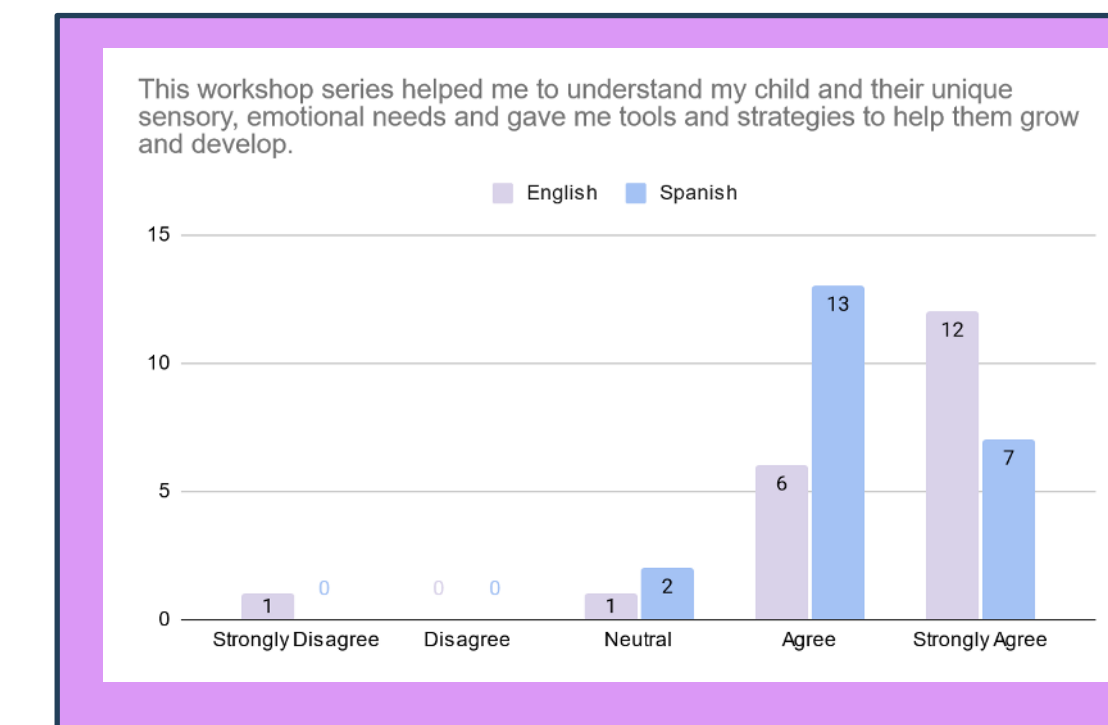
- Caregiver Workshop 1**
Sensory System
Emotional Regulation
- Caregiver Workshop 2**
The Environment
Routines
Wellness
- Teacher Workshop 1**
Sensory System
Emotional Regulation
- Teacher Workshop 2**
The Environment
Routines
- Teacher Workshop 3**
Wellness

Spanish Version

PROGRAM EVALUATION & OUTCOMES

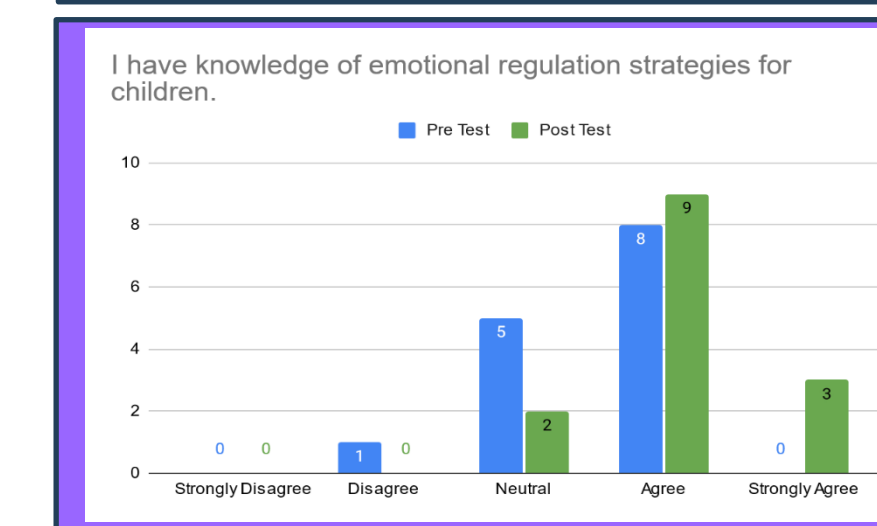
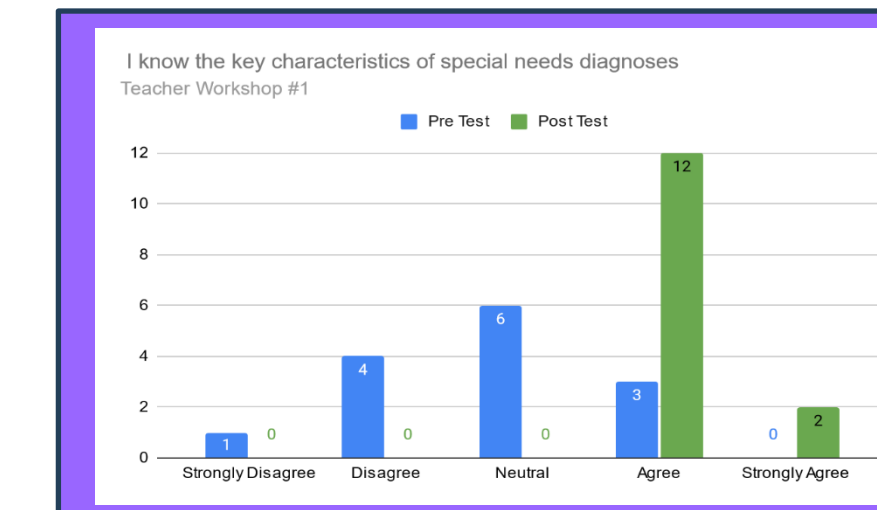
CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

- Increase in confidence
- Increase in knowledge of sensory and emotional regulation tools and strategies



TEACHER WORKSHOPS

- Increase in knowledge of special needs diagnoses
- Increase in knowledge of sensory and emotional regulation strategies and how to apply them in the classroom
- Wellness Strategies



QUALITATIVE THEMES

Sensory and Emotional Regulation Strategies

Increased Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Positive learning environment

“I definitely feel more confident in understanding my child’s emotional needs and sensory needs”

“Excellent workshop. Very detailed and educational, lots of very important materials were shared with all teachers and supervisors”

“I love that there was space for conversation”

SUMMARY OF DELIVERABLES

- Five Workshop Slide Decks in English, Two in Spanish
- Caregiver Handouts in English and Spanish
- Teacher Handouts
- Flyer
- Completion Certificate



DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS

- The program evaluation outcomes demonstrate a high rate of caregiver/parent and teacher knowledge and confidence in sensory and emotional behavior strategies
- Limitations in unequal sample sizes of caregiver workshop attendees and attrition of teacher workshop attendees
- Future directions for the project can focus on more specific interventions for caregiver and child dyad and using a standardized instrument for greater validity

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With deepest gratitude, this project would not have happened without the incredible guidance of Dr. Gantman and the support of my site mentors, Gaby and Alma. I am immensely grateful to all the CCP, Early Head Start and Head Start teachers at VOALA and the families who have helped me to complete this project. None of this would have been possible without my supportive family and fantastic cohort. Thank you!

REFERENCES

Scan QR Code here

