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Classroom Reintegration for Children and Adolescents with Traumatic Brain Injuries

Alli Perkins

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, a.perkins2@usa.edu

Mary Greer

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, mgreer@usa.edu

Keith McWilliams

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, kmcwilliams@usa.edu

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Classroom Reintegration for Children and Adolescents with Traumatic Brain Injuries

Alli Perkins, OTS; Dr. Mary Jan Greer, PhD, OTR; Dr. Keith McWilliams, OTD, OTR, DRS

BACKGROUND

Educators have a limited understanding of neurological events and how to offer support for students who have experienced a traumatic brain injury (TBI) (Kahn et al., 2018). School reintegration is also an area of difficulty for parents of children with TBIs (Roscigno et al., 2015). Many children who have experienced a TBI are ill-prepared to return to the classroom and achieve the best possible outcomes (Kahn et al., 2018). School-based occupational therapists are uniquely positioned to address academics, social participation, play and leisure, and other skills within the school environment for children returning after a TBI (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2017).

PROBLEM

There is a lack of education and training for parents and educators related to the school-based reintegration process (Käckenmester et al., 2022; Kahn et al., 2018; Popernack et al., 2015).

PURPOSE

To develop a program that will remedy the present knowledge gap among educators and parents by providing training and resources related to pediatric TBIs and the process of school reintegration following a pediatric TBI.

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METHODS

Sites:

- NEXUS Children's Hospital – Houston Campus
- Greater Houston Area School Districts (Supplemental – via email)

Process:

Needs Assessment

- Use of personal observations, informal interviews, educator surveys, and parent surveys to identify areas of need, participants' priorities, and for program development

Surveys

- Pre/Post surveys delivered via email
- Google Forms
- Open ended, multiple choice, Likert Scale

Participants

- Parents at NEXUS Children's Hospital
 - 1 invited; 1 participated
- Staff at Greater Houston Area School Districts
 - 88 invited; 11 participated
 - 7 School-based occupational therapists
 - 2 Special Education Coordinators
 - 1 Related Services Coordinator
 - 1 School-based certified occupational therapy assistant

Development

- Shared printed handouts/resources
- Created School-based Reintegration website

PROGRAM

General Program Goals:

1. Increase participants' understanding of pediatric TBIs and school-based reintegration
2. Improve participants' confidence in a) sending their children back to school and b) supporting students in the classroom upon return
3. Provide educational materials for parents, families, educators, and school personnel
4. Promote occupational engagement in the school environment following a pediatric TBI

Theoretical Frameworks:

1. Occupational Performance Process Model (OPPM)
2. Dove-Hawk Model of Allostatic Load for Youth with Persistent Concussion Symptoms

Outcome Objectives:

1. Complete a needs assessment to clarify problems and identify solutions to fill the knowledge gap
2. Complete education on 6-8 topics for parents and educators of children who have experienced a TBI
3. Establish a guideline/tentative protocol for parents and educators for returning to school following a pediatric TBI
4. Implement created resources via delivery of modules at a school or rehabilitation facility
5. Administer surveys upon completion of all other objectives to evaluate the effectiveness of the program

Modules:

1. General Information on Pediatric TBIs
2. General Information on School-based Reintegration
3. School-based Interventions
4. School-based Supports
5. Educator Guideline for School-based Reintegration following Pediatric TBIs
 - Educators' Role in Reintegration
 - Accommodations
6. Parent Guideline for School-based Reintegration following Pediatric TBIs
 - General Steps of Reintegration
 - Neuropsychological Testing
 - Caregiver Burnout
7. Frequently Asked Questions
8. Additional Resources

CONCLUSIONS

Discussion:

- The program positively impacted parents and educators by increasing their confidence in sending their children back to school and supporting children in the classroom following pediatric TBIs.
- The program increased the knowledge of all participants related to pediatric TBIs and school-based reintegration.

Recommendations:

- Expansion of program beyond Houston area
- Offer resources/website in Spanish

WEBSITE



REFERENCES

