

Presenter: Peri Hernandez

Session & Time: Oral I

Room/Time: GUZ 104 / 10:00-10:20

Discipline: Occupational Therapy

Faculty Mentor: Julia Wilbarger

Digital Portfolio URL:

Title: Lived Experience of Caregiver Implementation of Sensory Diet

Abstract:

The term â€œsensory diet,â€ coined by Patricia Wilbarger refers to the process of providing a child with individualized sensorimotor activities to be performed throughout the day to improve the ability to maximize self regulations and successfully engage in daily tasks, activities or occupations (Weeks et al., 2012). Sensory diets are commonly introduced to pediatric clients and their caregivers by occupational therapists as home and/or school programs. Occupational therapists provide caregivers with education on how to facilitate the sensory diet through sensory-motor activities that address their childâ€™s unique goals and sensory processing needs. The successful provision of a sensory diet remains dependent on caregiver support as the programs are carried out at home or school and must be repeated multiple times throughout the day. (Wilbarger, 1995; Wilbarger & Wilbarger, 2002).

Through increased awareness, research advancement, and advocacy around sensory processing deficits, interest in implementing and facilitating sensory diets has grown in clinics, homes, and schools as a popular intervention to address sensory challenges. This popularity can be attributed to the holistic, client-centered, and playful elements encompassing a properly facilitated sensory diet. Despite this popularity, a current gap in research exists due to the lack of data surrounding caregiver experiences and perceptions about providing sensory diets for their children. This research project will address this gap by gathering data on the experiences and perceptions of caregivers who facilitate sensory diets for their children via qualitative interviews. The research will target parents/caregivers who have children between the ages of 4 and 18 with neurodevelopmental or sensory processing disruptions who have provided sensory diets as part of their childâ€™s occupational therapy intervention programs.