

Occupational Therapy in Children's Centres

Kobie Boshoff UniSA
2010 CCC Conference



Content

- Background to new OT positions in Children's Centres
- Project: OT in Children's Centres (Parks)
- Outcomes of the project
- Proposed service delivery framework
- Lessons learnt



Background to OT positions

Children's Centres for Early Childhood and Parenting:

- New initiative by DECS
- Aim to improve outcomes for children in various areas e.g. health, development
- Brings together various services for families within their communities
- Anticipated to have 30 centres in SA by 2013-2014
- Collaboration between DECS, Health and various government departments
- Birth – 8 years
- Services tailored for local need



Background to positions

Allied Health in Children's Centres:

- 5 OT positions created – services 8 centres
- OT & speech therapy positions
- Positioned within SA Health Primary health teams, funded through DECS
- Focus is on children with developmental delay



Project: OT at Parks Primary Health

- Funding re-directed into project
- Aim: to establish OT service, for Parks, Cowandilla and Ocean View centres
- Steering committee
- Aug 2009 – July 2010
- Benefits of doing this as a project



Project: OT in Children's Centres

Various outcomes including:

- Establishing a new service:
 - Development of a proposed Service Delivery Framework document based on best practice principles, consistency amongst other positions
 - Referral & consent processes
 - Priorities of Service Delivery doc
 - Resources for OT position
 - Promotion/ education re OT role
- Assessment & intervention:
 - 4 year old screening tool
 - SMILE group program
 - Trailing of group programs
- Ongoing outcomes:
 - Student placements
 - Recruitment of OT into role
 - Recommendations re workforce development etc



Intervention phase

- Referral
- Assessment, screening
- Intervention: 1:1, groups
- Staff training

4 year old screening tool

- Designed to be administered by staff at centre
- First level screening
- Base for further decision making:
 - Referral to Allied Health or other services
 - OT specialist assessment
 - Directly into OT group
 - OT to make recommendations for preschool
- Training with staff at centres



Training on use of screening tool

- It is the consistency with which the child is displaying the behaviour/ displays the behaviour the majority of the time.
- When making observations: try and distinguish between:
 - child's ability to listen and follow instructions/
 - to be able to pay attention/
 - and be able to execute the task properly
- Ensure you get the best performance from the child: 1:1, no distractions, appropriate clothing, correct seating, practice some items

Examples of observations

- Drawing:
 - Sits with head close to work
 - Presses too hard/ not hard enough
 - Uses non-dominant hand to support dominant hand?
 - Switches dominant hand?
 - Open mouth posture, tongue sticking out/ other movements

Examples of observations

- Movements are awkward/clumsy/shakey
- Movement are not in logical order/ sequential order
- Falls easily, trips over things
- Tentative/ scared/ reluctant to do gross motor
- Can the child do the tasks in a well coordinated/ planned way?
- Balance: is the child displaying rigid body movements? Unwillingness to move quickly/ adapt to the balance requirements? Arms used excessively? Losing balance easily?
- Is the child paying attention to the instructions given? Is the child rushing through the movements without doing them properly?

4 year old screening tool

- Areas covered:
 - Social
 - Emotional
 - Play
 - Auditory and Speech
 - Fine Motor
 - Gross Motor
 - Sensory
 - Sensory Motor
 - Self Care
 - Behaviour

Sensory-Motor

Comments:	Yes	No
Does the child become overly excited with movement activities?		
Excessively seeks out intense movement experiences like spinning, twirling, bouncing etc		
Does the child hesitate to climb or play on playground equipment?		
Seems overly scared of different movement activities?		
Does the child look clumsy and uncoordinated?		
Does the child have difficulty learning a new skill requiring coordination?		
Does the child fall often?		
Does the child get knocked over more easily than others?		
Is the child able to maintain an upright, stable posture while doing table top activities/ sitting on the mat (no slumps/ w-sitting/ leaning on furniture)?		
Does the child appear to have floppy or soft muscles in arms, legs and face?		
Does the child get tired easily?		
Seems weaker than other children of their own age?		
Comments:		

SMILE program

Designed to be run by staff/ students with input from an OT

Example of session outline

Video:

- Calming activity
- Gross motor



Other intervention resources

- Developed by students
- Complemented the project

Proposed framework for service delivery

- Consistency of services across sites important
- Broad range of services
- Complex services
- Limited in terms of direct intervention
- Proposed model focuses on:
 - dual focus on preschool/ childcare on site and community development programs
 - capacity building of centre staff
 - Collaboration with centre staff
 - Systems approach
 - Inclusive practice
 - Student involvement



Lessons learnt...

- Collaborative approach is essential – partnership model
- Relationship building important
- Agreement to have a site staff member involved in OT intervention to ensure transfer of techniques into routine
- Staff release arrangements
- OT to become part of the system
 - learn educational talk and priorities, participate in school routines



Lessons learnt...

- Educational relevant goals
- Time for meetings, communication etc
- OT to spend time on site, be part of routines, work in proximity of each other
- Work as an equal, not expert. Learn from each other
- Informal/ formal discussions
- Team based problem solving
- Management support



Opportunities...

- Working in functional contexts of children: best OT practice from literature
- Collaborating & relationship building with DECS & other services' staff
- Development of new service exciting
- Capacity building of others and yourself
- Services to families who are falling through the gaps
- Early identification



The value of OT in these centres..

Video clip



Thank you for your time today.

Kobie Boshoff
Kobie.boshoff@unisa.edu.au

