Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, Summer 2021

Summer 8-12-2021

Occupational Therapist’s Impact in Current and Changing Roles and Routines for First-Time Foster Parents

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A foster parent is defined as being “intended to provide temporary, safe living arrangements and therapeutic services for children who cannot remain safely at home because of risk of maltreatment or inadequate care” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). Roles and routines are meaningful and valuable in individuals’ lives, and foster parents may not understand the importance and chance of disruption when taking on a new, empowering role as a foster parent. Occupational therapists hold a unique role by understanding the significance of roles and routines and through education, support and techniques can help to decrease disruption to these domains. OT’s can further play a vital role in educating population on current and changing roles and routines for the foster parent population and offer tools to establish, preserve and maintain these unique domains.

**METHODS**

**Participants**

Participants were gathered through personal contacts, mentor’s personal contacts, word of mouth and snowball sampling.

- Foster, Adoptive & Kinship Care Education Program
- www.fakce.org

**Observations**

Straight from the Heart in San Marcos where verbal interactions with staff and the foster care population took place.

**Survey & Interviews**

Two surveys were created through Google forms containing both qualitative and quantitative questions. One survey was created for first-time foster parents and the other for foster parents with more than 3 months experience. Participants were given the option to participate in a 30–45-minute interview to better understand the foster parent population through Zoom, or phone.

- 37 survey responses
- 8 virtual interviews

**Transcription & Analysis**

Interviews were transcribed through Microsoft Word Dictation. Transcripts were analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

**RESULTS**

When fostering, were there roles that were affected or changed? (Example: A role may be a mother, father, friend or caregiver?)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role Changed</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
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When fostering, were there routines that were affected or changed? (Example: A routine may be a morning walk or game night every Monday)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Routine Changed</th>
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**Acknowledgement:** Special thanks to Patty Boles and the incredible staff at Straight from the Heart

**DISCUSSION**

This study allowed for insight into current and changing roles and routines for first-time foster parents. The results from this study allowed for further comprehension on how roles and routines were impacted, and that education and tools can be used to help decrease disruption to these domains. Understanding that taking on a new role as a foster parent means routines will be impacted in one way or another. Through education on resources and support available as well data from interviews and surveys may help to decrease such disruption and allow for roles and routines to be established, preserved and maintained to improve the transition and overall quality of life.

**Dissemination:** Data collected from surveys and interviews was organized and analyzed and from there a binder was created including education on roles and routines, tips for establishing, preserving and maintaining, various resources available to population as well as advice and challenges faced from experienced foster parents. The binder is available to view and download on www.fakce.org.