



EMPOWERING THE SOUTH BRONX COMMUNITY THROUGH OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES AND RESOURCE APPLICATION

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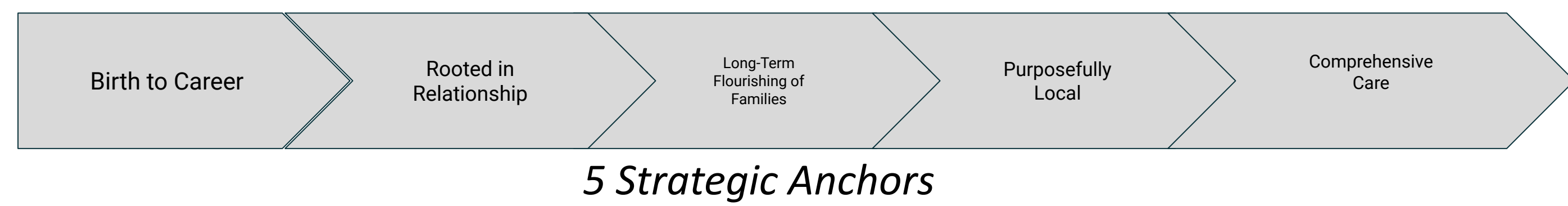


OVERVIEW OF CAPSTONE SITE

Mission: To create a seamless series of educational programs from birth to college to career that empowers the next generation of the South Bronx to live out their full potential.

Vision: The hope for the future is to see the cycles of poverty broken, and complete renewal of the New York neighborhood eventually.

Curriculum actively reflects social-emotional learning (SEL), emotional literacy, trauma-informed care (TIC), anti-bias education, and guiding principles shift away from a deficit focus and utilize a strength-based approach. This method explores strength and allows one to see opportunities, hope and solutions rather than just problems and barriers (Hammond, n.d.). This method acknowledges each child and family's unique set of strengths and challenges, and builds relationships to learn from one another



5 Strategic Anchors

LITERATURE SUMMARY

Research indicates children under the age of three with developmental delays or disabilities who live in low-income neighborhoods of color are less likely to receive critical services that could help them (AFC, 2019). Only 61% of children found eligible for services in the Bronx received them by the 30-day legal deadline—less than in any other borough.

Immersion is crucial to success in community practice and allows therapists to face their own biases head on (Voltz-Doll, 2008). In order to understand community needs, one must spend time exploring the impact of occupations on communities and building relationships. Application of OT principles can provide advocacy opportunities, skill building, education, and client-centered approaches (Smalls, Smith, Yu, & Lewis, 2019).

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Phase I: Completed virtual needs assessment with capstone key informants in June, 2020. Emphasized the mass inequality occurring in the South Bronx, and how the pandemic had only magnified those effects.

Phase II: Completed on-site classroom observations, caregiver questionnaires, and informal staff interviews by week 2 to determine how occupational therapy could support the various needs of children in the community.

Qualitative Tools:

1. Informal interviews
2. Observations
3. Caregiver questionnaire

Identified Needs:

1. Caregiver & staff support
2. Education
3. Advocacy

PROJECT GOALS / OBJECTIVES

- Actively collaborate and communicate with staff and caregivers to better understand community needs and identify areas for improvement at AHOB.
- Apply evidence-based OT principles and intervention methods to the preschool, babies-to-three, and after-school programs at AHOB. Enhance understanding of the role of occupational therapy in vulnerable communities and youth programs through full-immersion in AHOB setting.
- Design and implement in-service presentation on the unique role of occupational therapy and the capstone purpose and project.
- Implement relevant evidence-based practice Implement relevant evidence-based practice regarding trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, and increase overall knowledge on systemic oppression and how it correlates to childhood development.
- Develop educational OT Toolkit manual for staff and caregivers with occupation-based strategies and resources they can use to improve seamless series programming and positive youth development.
- Construct interactive resources and classroom supports that enhance participation and support developmental/sensory needs of children.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of the capstone project will focus on the provision of *occupation-focused care*, essential resources, and staff/caregiver education to better support the mission of A House on Beekman and address the needs and barriers commonly faced by the South Bronx community. OT strategies will be implemented through the creation of an OT Toolkit manual that supports the seamless series and empowers community development and well-being.

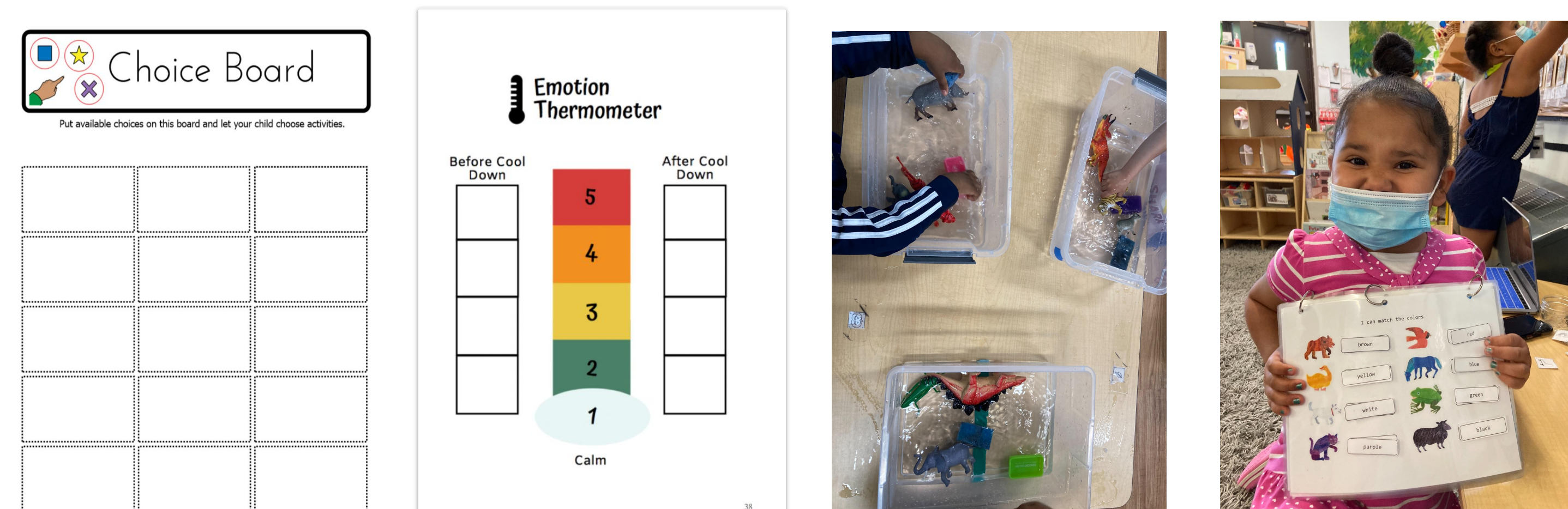
Summer, 2020	February	March	April	May
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phase I Needs Assessment: administer structured online interview with key informants.• Establish rapport.• Gain understanding of the role occupational therapy can have at community facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phase II Needs Assessment: administer caregiver questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with staff. Analyze findings and common themes.• Implement OT lens and begin to develop and implement occupation-based resources and protocols.• Engage in guided observations; learning the environment, staff, kids, daily tasks, and potential barriers to be faced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete informative presentation to educate staff on the unique role of occupational therapy.• Construct handouts, tip sheets, and strategies to aid environmental supports, classroom design, and child participation. Examples of deliverables explained and pictured below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide essential resources and early intervention (EI) awareness training to staff to better support occupational performance needs and skill caregiver for babies-to-three and preschool programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administer electronic and paper binder version of OT Toolkit to staff and caregivers at AHOB.• Administer Teacher & Caregiver Perspective Satisfaction Outcome Survey. Analyze results.

Visual Support Board: If your child is overwhelmed by too many choices OR some of the schedule pieces are not options in your home, you can cut out a smaller number of choices and stick them on this board for your child to choose from. This can also be used as a reward choice board.

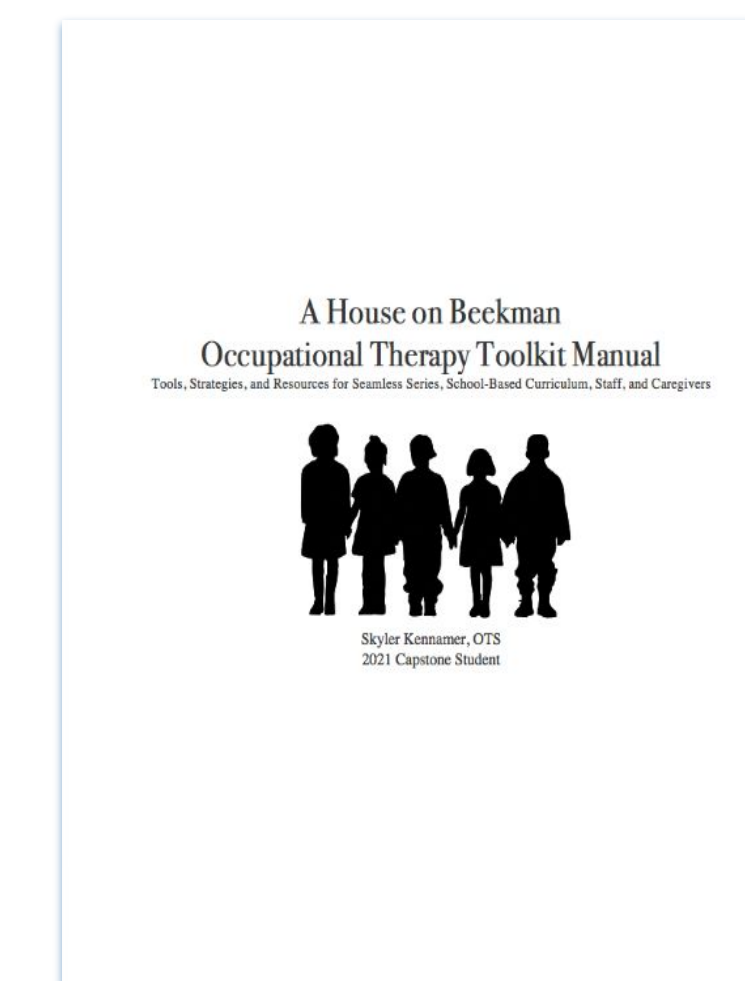
Emotion Thermometer: Implemented to help children develop coping skills and a deepening understanding of emotion. recognize their emotions/feelings. This tool allows children to recognize and put a name to those feelings and rate how intensely they feel each emotion.

Sensory Exploration Bin: Visual and physical tool for calming and self-regulation. Allows for decompression, sensory exploration, and can be a great addition to classroom calm down corner or sensory area.

Interactive Busy Booklet: Targets fine motor skills, self-care tasks, and executive functioning. Enhances child engagement by providing various activities that promote child participation and focuses attention.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

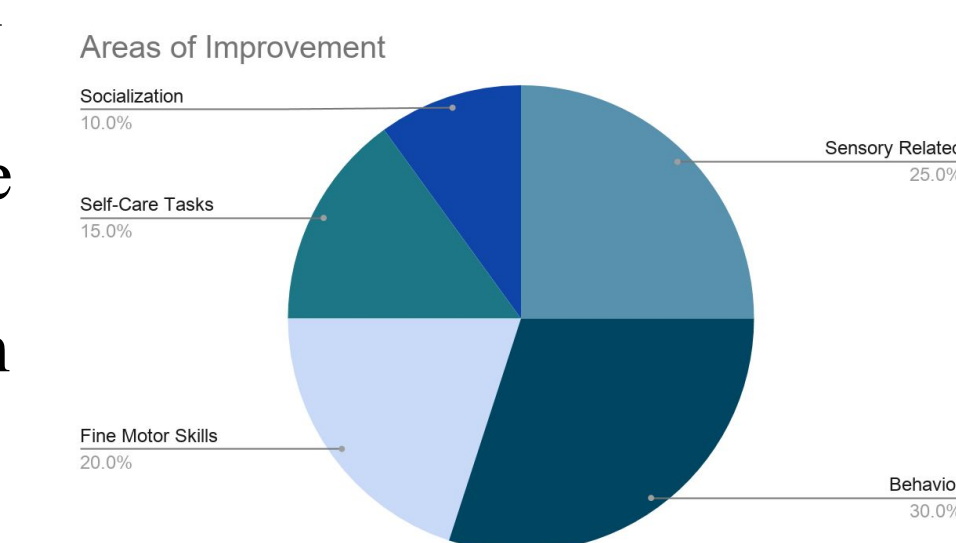


OT Toolkit: 60-page manual that offers occupation-based strategies, tips, and creates open discussion for how to handle or approach challenging situations and support child development. This toolkit was developed to serve as an educational tool and may be accessed electronically or in paper form at the Jackson site in the South Bronx. This manual includes helpful handouts and protocol activities that cover a vast range of skill areas and common diagnoses in hopes to foster healthy development and well being at House on Beekman. Topics include developmental milestones, sensory, behavior interventions (tantrum vs. meltdown), fine motor skills, play, socialization, vision, self-care, and caregiver education.

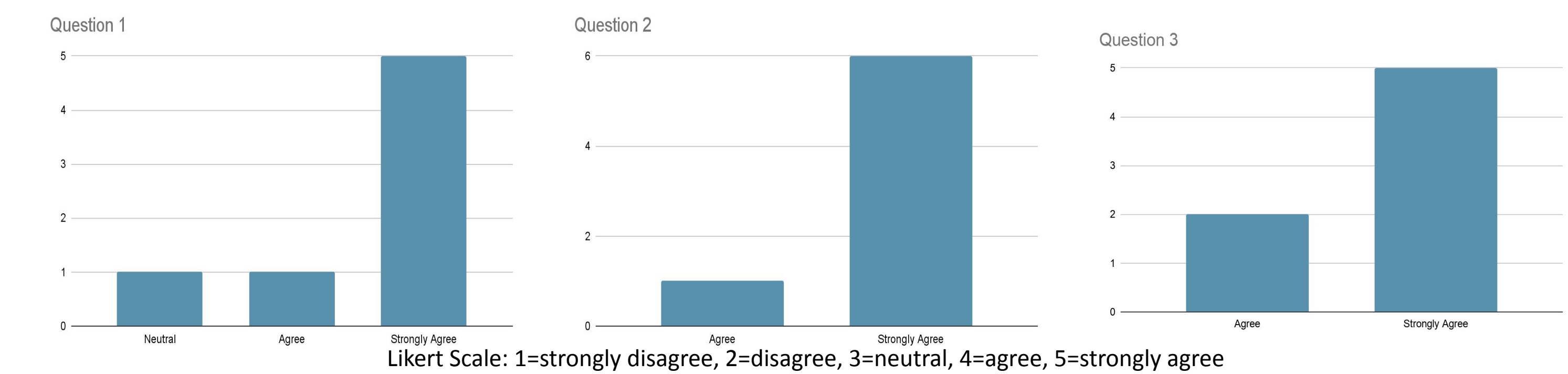
PROJECT EVALUATION

Conducted informal interviews with caregivers and teachers. Themes from interviews included the following:

- Teachers can implement sensory breaks and calm down corners into the classroom.
- Students benefit from mindfulness and coping strategy practice through different activities such as yoga, meditation, coloring, deep breathing, and practicing gratitude.
- Caregivers and staff reported Improvements in the following areas: sensory, behavior, fine motor skills, self-care tasks, socialization, and visual perception.



Staff + Caregiver Perspective Survey was allocated and completed by 7 caregivers and teachers from House on Beekman. Survey consisted of 3 questions using the likert scale (1-5). Results below.



PROJECT SUMMARY AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Occupational therapists can play a vital role in assisting community based facilities with program development and educating staff and caregivers.

Further implementation and modifications to this program by occupational therapy practitioners may help to further validate the role of occupational therapy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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