Developing a Program to Train Educators on Red Flags and Remediation for Promoting Normal Development in Elementary Children

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OVERVIEW OF CAPSTONE SITE
St. Andrew’s Episcopal School is a private institution that is funded by tuition from the students each year. It is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and belongs to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). The average student to teacher ratio in the NAIS is 8.6:1, and the median class size is 15 students. The Lower School population is students ages Pre-K – 4th grade. The curriculum builds on skills introduced in Early Childhood and uses an active, hands-on approach that makes learning exciting, fun, and contagious. A spirited, family-like atmosphere balances the academic, artistic, and social-emotional aspects of education, resulting in happy, self-confident student. The mission of St. Andrews Episcopal School is to nurture a diverse community in the Episcopal tradition, fostering spiritual growth, moral responsibility, academic excellence, and artistic and athletic pursuits, while preparing for a life of service to our community and the world.

LITERATURE SUMMARY
The developmental stage theory suggests that development is a journey through a series of stages in which the individual has grown and integrated the previous stages (Ciccarelli, 2014). St. Andrews uses the developmental stage in its curriculum for understanding how a child is learning through the development of fine motor skills. The school views each child’s development as an individual and offers appropriate guidance and resources to assist in mastering developmental stages.

Handwriting is a complex skill that requires the process of coordinating the eyes, arms, hands, pencil grip, letter formation, and body posture (Handwriting, n.d.). Occupational Therapists observe and assess the mechanisms that are essential for handwriting, such as finger dexterity, visual-motor skills, and fine motor coordination (Bruininks, Oseretsky, Bobbino, Ries, & Gabbard, 1999).

NEEDS ASSESSMENT
The Capstone Project aimed to educate teachers and parents on Red Flags in OT related skills (fine motor, bilateral coordination, social skills, and visual perception, and Visual Motor skills) for ages Pre-K – 2nd grade. The Red Flags Program was created to provide activities for each skill identified with easy-to-follow instructions to strengthen skills. Also, it provided hyperlinks to free resources and worksheets.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
Red Flags for OT related skills: Fine Motor, Bilateral Coordination, Social Skills, Visual Perception, Sensory Processing (Grades Pre-K – 2nd Grade)

List of easy to perform activities for each OT skill with instructions and pictures

Links to the activities and free printable worksheets

PROJECT SUMMARY AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS
The Capstone Project aimed to educate teachers and parents on Red Flags in OT related skills (fine motor, bilateral coordination, social skills, and visual perception, and Visual Motor skills) for ages Pre-K – 2nd grade. The Red Flags Program was created to provide activities for each skill identified with easy-to-follow instructions to strengthen skills. Also, it provided hyperlinks to free resources and worksheets. The program also provided educational handouts regarding proper development of pencil grasp, scissor progression, benefits of core and shoulder strength to increase handwriting legibility and improve sitting posture. Future research could include determining a method of ensuring all teachers are teaching proper letter formation. Present and educate teachers on how to use Red Flags Screening Tool, continue to work with students in small and individual groups using activities from Red Flags Program, and document feedback and progress using an additional survey.

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