

Students Engage in Interprofessional Service Learning

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Background

“Interprofessional education occurs when students from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes... This is a key step in moving health systems from fragmentation to a position of strength.” (WHO, 2010) As occupational therapy students we got to collaborate with our peers across all the colleges at OUHSC for increased access to healthcare and school readiness for the OKC community. One of the screenings we provided assessed handwriting for school aged children. This screening was a quick and impactful way we could use our occupational therapy skills to support school readiness for children in our community.

OT Process at the Unity Clinic Health Fair

Step 1: Sharing a brief introduction of OT with families.

Step 2: Guide to screening
Parents stay at the information booth gaining knowledge of fine motor activities. Children guided to handwriting table with stickers.

Step 3: Screening
OT Student guides the child in the Wold Handwriting Screening and gathers data.

Step 4: Caregiver Education
If further evaluation is needed, the caregivers receive their child's scores to take with them to their teacher and physician. OT provides education on where OT services are provided, and recommendations based on their child's results. Families get a home activities resource sheet to take with them.

The University of Oklahoma Occupational Therapy Department

FUN WAYS TO IMPROVE HANDWRITING

- CRAWLING AND JUNGLE GYMS**
Crawling strengthens the arms, hands and fingers. Hanging, swinging, and pulling up on play equipment strengthens arms and hands.
- BROKEN CRAYONS COLORING AND DRAWING**
Coloring with small or broken crayons and pencils help kids learn how to hold pencils when writing.
- PLAYDOUGH, LEGOS AND CLOTHESPINS**
Playtime using the finger tips, pinching and rolling help with handwriting.
- ORIGAMI (PAPER FOLDING)**
Making paper objects works on hand/finger skills and hand-eye coordination.
- BOARD GAMES AND CRAFTS**
Cards, board games, cooking, and crafts develop hand strength and skill.
- PRACTICE WRITING**
Tracing shapes and letters, writing thank you notes, holiday cards, drawing, making comic books all help promote handwriting improvement.

Phones and tablets are good for brain games not hand/finger strengthening

The educational materials are provided in English and Spanish!

The Student Experience

Working as a Team
We got to work interprofessionally with medical, physician associate, audiology, nursing, social work, and dental students! We were taking blood pressure, A1C, and providing handwriting Screenings.

Handwriting Screenings:
Real world experience administering and scoring assessments, communicating with caregivers, and providing resources!

Interprofessional Education
Students got experience explaining the role of OT to other disciplines as well as visiting other disciplines and learning their roles.

The Wold Handwriting Screening

Gender: M F Age: _____ grade level: _____ Glasses: Y N _____ Handedness: L R _____

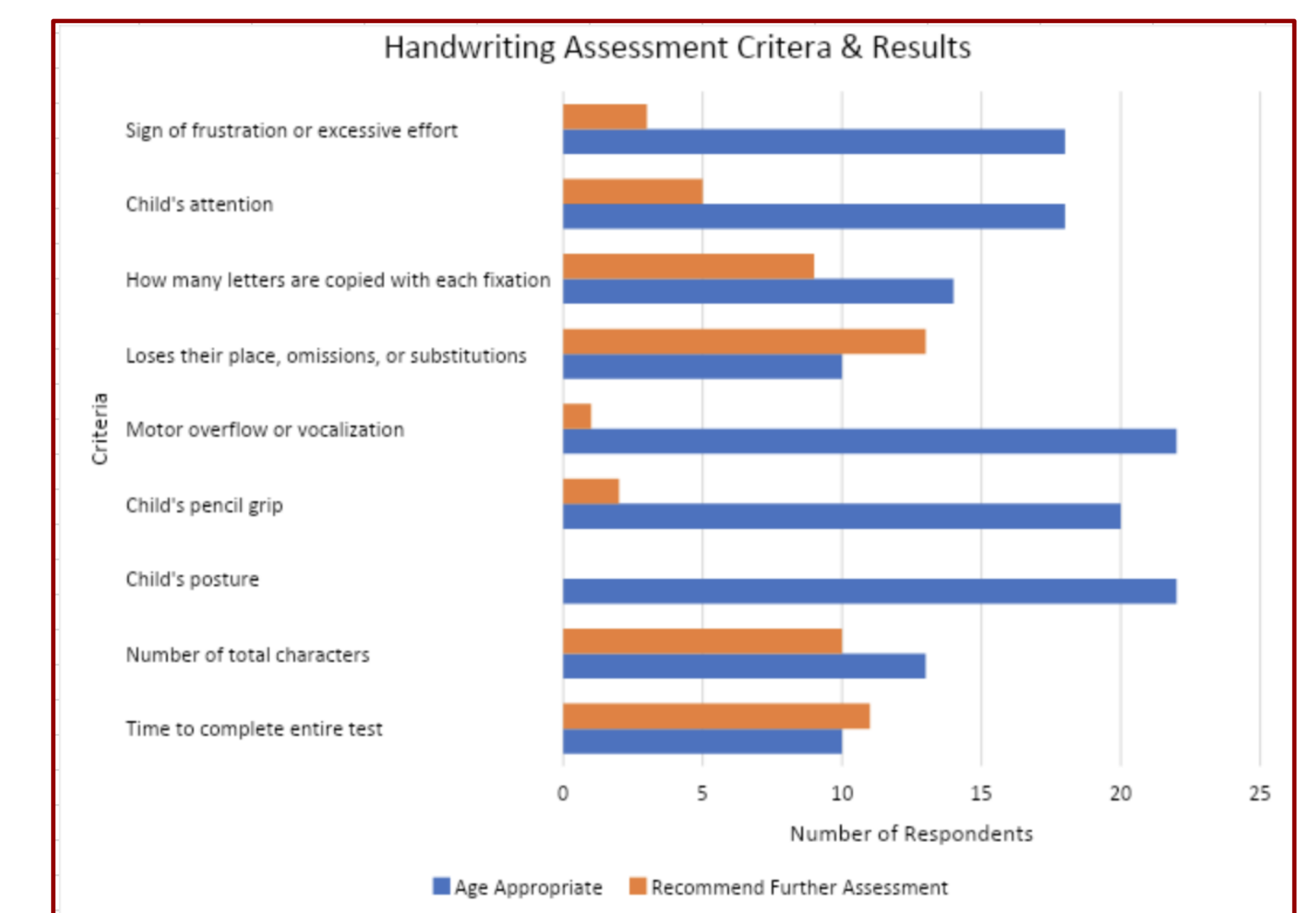
Notes	Age appropriate	Recommend further assessment
Time to complete entire test		
Number of total characters		
Child's posture		
Child's pencil grip		
Motor overflow or vocalization		
Lose their place, omissions or substitutions		
How many letters are copied with each fixation		
Child's Attention		
Signs of frustration or excessive effort		

If your child has any of the yellow boxes checked, please consider following up with your pediatrician or your child's teacher. Occupational therapists can work with children to improve their writing skills.

Assessment Tool: The Wold Sentence Copy Test is a timed test designed to evaluate the child's speed and accuracy when copying a sentence from the top of a page to the lines on the rest of the page.

Data Collection Form: The form above was de-identified for each child. It assessed performance skills that directly or indirectly impact handwriting and other occupations involved in school participation. It also included contextual factors to be taken into consideration. It easily identified when further assessment was needed.

Results



Conclusion

It becomes more challenging to “catch up” the further behind a child gets in school. Many children need related services such as OT to meet their individual needs in learning. Based on data collected, many of these children are struggling in school but do not receive the help that they need.

Next Steps

Continue to advocate for occupational therapy services for children at risk for fine motor delay. Continue to train students on administering and scoring the assessment tool as well as talking with parents. Continue to collaborate with the other health professions in community outreach events.

References:

