



American  
Occupational Therapy  
Association



AOTA Specialty Conference:

# Children & Youth

## Program Guide





**AOA**

# INSPIRE

2025 Annual Conference & Expo | April 3–5



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## December 12, 2024

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Issaquah

### Workshop 1

#### Self-regulation in an Anxious World: Developing an Intervention to Promote Mental Health for Adolescents

Jessica McHugh Conlin, PhD, OTR/L, BCP, Pn1, Healthy 360°, Sergeant Bluff, IA; Aimee Piller, PhD, OTR/L, BCP, FAOTA, Piller Child Development, LLC, Phoenix, AZ

Contributing Author: David Rooney

This session will provide practitioners with the tools to implement an effective mental health program in their setting to promote self-regulation from an emotional, cognitive, and sensory standpoint with a focus on managing and preventing anxiety.

3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Ravenna

### Workshop 2

#### Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for Improved Occupational Performance and Participation of Adolescents at Home and School

Julia Colman, OTD, OTR/L, BCP, Northern Arizona University, Phoenix, AZ

Explore the incorporation of DBT into traditional occupational therapy models in school-based and telehealth settings for improved educational participation and overall mental health of neurodivergent adolescents.

## Special Event

5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Issaquah

#### AOTA Town Hall and Welcome Reception

Come and have a dialogue with AOTA President Alyson Stover and Chief Executive Officer Katie Jordan. AOTA wants to hear from you.

## December 13, 2024

## Keynote

8:00 am - 8:45 am

Metropolitan Ballroom

#### Promoting Well-being in Children, Youth, and Ourselves: Functional Strategies to Implement in All Practice Settings

Caitlin Smith, OTD, OTR/L, CLT-UE, University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago, IL

This workshop will cover how to promote well-being in children, youth, and their families and how to practice well-being as practitioners. Strategies such as rest, sleep, time management, wellness action plans, and mindfulness will be discussed.

## Concurrent Sessions

9:00 am - 10:00 am

Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 101

#### Using Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM) to Inform Strengths and Intervention Planning for Children With Diverse Needs

Annie Baltazar, OTD, OTR/L, playSense, Torrance, CA; Kelly Auld-Wright, OTD, OTR/L, Keck Graduate Institute (KGI),

Torrance, CA

Contributing Author: Aja Roley, OTD, OTR/L

Participants will learn how DDDM supports professional reasoning to illuminate the relationship between a client's reported strengths and data collected in a comprehensive assessment.

Cirrus Ballroom

### Concurrent 102

#### Implementing a Sensory-Friendly Adaptive Aquatics Program for Children with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

Michelle Kennedy, Western New England University, Springfield, MA

Contributing Authors: Dorothy Linder; Erin Wells

Caregivers of children with disabilities participated in a sensory-friendly adaptive aquatics program. Pre- and post-surveys were used to understand how effective the program is in improving safety awareness and basic swimming skills.

10:15 am - 11:15 am

Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 103

#### It's a Sign: Considerations for Working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Brigid Bendig, Pioneer Therapy with The Valens Group, Chicago, IL; Evguenia Popova, PhD, OTR/L, Rush University, Chicago, IL

Contributing Author: Kate Gilliat, MS, CCC-SLP

This presentation discusses occupational therapy considerations for working with deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) children. A case study will be used to illustrate occupation-based evaluation and intervention approaches.

## Cirrus Ballroom

### Concurrent 104

#### **Goal Setting to Lay the Sensory Regulation Foundation for Autistic Children: A Top-Down, Strengths-Based, and Neurodiversity-Affirming Approach**

Jessalyn Dickerson, MSOT, OTR/L, BCP, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus, OH

Interactive session on collaborative goal-setting with autistic children/families for meaningful participation using GAS & DDDM process. Emphasizes regulation as a foundation and aligns with most recent practice guidelines for autistic people.

11:30 am - 12:30 pm

## Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 105

#### **School Mental Health Advocacy: Opening Doors to Meet the Needs of ALL Students**

Sarah Greene, OTD, OTR/L, St. Catherine University, St. Paul, MN

Occupational therapy practitioners play an important role in school mental health. Through ESSA, utilizing MTSS, practitioners should feel empowered to advocate, address barriers, and open doors to address the needs of ALL students through our unique role in mental health promotion initiatives.

## Cirrus Ballroom

### Concurrent 106

#### **Understanding and Supporting Personality Styles Through a Sensory Emotional Lens**

Michele Parkins, MS, OTR, IMH-E; AnnMarie Murphy, OTD, OT/L, CIMI-2, both of Great Kids Place, Rockaway, NJ

Contributing Author: Sarah Schoen, PhD, OTR, STAR Institute, Greenwood Village, CO

Understanding personality styles, with sensation and emotion in mind, can guide us in our treatment planning and interactions with children in a way that strengthens our relationships and enhances engagement and regulation within daily occupations.

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm

## Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 107

#### **Maximizing Occupational Therapy's Impact for Early Learners: Building Educator Capacity Through Coaching and Collaboration**

Moira Bushell, OTD, MEd, OTR/L, BCP, Exceptional Learners Collaborative, Vernon Hills, IL; Allison Brown

With increasing workloads, occupational therapy practitioners must utilize existing resources in new ways to support all learners. Using an occupational therapy lens, student support capacity was enhanced through collaboration and coaching between practitioners and educators.

## Cirrus Ballroom

### Concurrent 108

#### **Well-Siblings: The Unseen Needs of Siblings of Children With High Support Needs**

Sophia Lovell, MA, OTR/L, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

Well-siblings, the siblings of children with high support needs, require more recognition and support to their lived experiences. Occupational therapy practitioners are uniquely positioned to support the well-sibling, as well as utilize them to strengthen the care we provide.

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

## Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 109

#### **Just Breathe! Enhancing School-Based Occupational Therapy With Mindfulness**

Neha Chugh-Gupta, OTD, New Franklin Elementary, Columbia, MO

This presentation offers participants a comprehensive understanding of mindfulness, including its scope, benefits, challenges, and practical ideas to use within school-based occupational therapy.

## Cirrus Ballroom

### Concurrent 110

#### **Assessment and Intervention Within the Pediatric Rehabilitation Continuum: Application to Acute Neurological Insult, A Single Case Study**

Clara Altemus, OTR/L, BCP, PMH-C, Randall Children's Hospital, Portland, OR; Mary Sroka

This short course will apply evidence from adult neurorehabilitation to the population of pediatric acute neurological insult. Participants will explore assessments and interventions across the rehabilitation continuum to enhance long term outcomes.





## Poster Session

4:15 pm - 5:15 pm

Metroplitan Foyer

### Poster 101

#### Effectiveness of Video Prompting Versus Picture Prompting in Improving Daily Living Skills of Autistic Children

Jeryl Benson, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Duquesne University, Gibsonia, PA

Contributing Authors: Alivia Cartwright, OTD, OTR/L; Kimberly Szucs, PhD, OTR/L

This poster will present outcomes from a study focused on the use of video modeling vs. static picture schedules as an intervention for supporting participation in daily living skills for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

### Poster 102

#### Access to Healthcare for Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) During the Transition to Adulthood in Rural Communities: A Qualitative Study

Tara Naimpally, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Contributing Author: Parisa Ghanouni, PhD

Youth with ASD in rural areas face health care challenges during the transition to adulthood. This study highlights a need for better health care access particularly in rural areas.

### Poster 103

#### An Inter-Professional Trauma-Informed Care Program for Children and Youth in Underrepresented Communities

Patricia Precin, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Columbia University, New York, NY

Contributing Authors: Phyllis Simon, OTD, OTR/L, FNAP; Monica Manfredonia

Creation, design, and outcomes of a grant-funded interprofessional trauma-informed care program for under-

represented communities of children and youth will be presented to direct others in how to incorporate these principles into their practice.

### Poster 105

#### Promoting Multi-tiered Systems of Support and Youth Mental Health: A Tier One Pilot Program for Elementary School Students

Kelly Danielson, OTD, OTR/L, Bainbridge Island School District, Bainbridge Island, WA

This pilot program offers a creative approach to increase occupational therapy practitioners' involvement in MTSS and youth mental health in school-based settings through a Tier One intervention program that supports the whole child.

### Poster 106

#### Sensory's Role in the General Education Classroom

Grace Sievert, AT Still University of Health Sciences, Mesa, AZ

Contributing Author: Abbey Glenn, OTD, OTR/L, BCG, CBIS; Briana Bonner, OTD, OTR/L

Significant improvements identified from 46 participants among five schools from an occupational therapist-led sensory training for academic faculty.

### Poster 107

#### School-Based Trauma-Informed Care for Children with Autism: A Continuing Education Course

Nicole Newell, OTD, OTR/L, Henderson County Public Schools, Hendersonville, NC

Additional Speaker: Rae Ann Smith, OTD, OTR/L, Bay Path University, Phoenix, MD

A course was developed to provide school staff with practical, evidence-based, trauma-informed screening tools and interventions for working with children with autism using integrated approaches to improve occupational performance.

### Poster 108

#### Using Response to Intervention to Improve Kindergarten Students' Fine and Visual-Motor Skills

Rachael Mathieson, OTD, OTR/L, Bay Path University, Longmeadow, MA; Rae Ann Smith, OTD, OTR/L, Bay Path University, Phoenix, AZ

An occupational therapy response to intervention program was developed and implemented to improve kindergarten students' fine and visual-motor skills. The outcomes were positive and support the need for these services to occur in the school setting.

### Poster 109

#### Viewing the Impact of Virtual Learning Environments Through an Interdisciplinary Lens

Shruti Gadkari, OTR/L, Pacific University, Tualatin, OR

Contributing Authors: Paula Luke, OD, FAAO; Paul Michael, PhD

Using an interdisciplinary lens, occupational therapy, audiology, and optometry professionals collaborated to evaluate the impact of prolonged virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic on children's sensory processing needs.

### Poster 110

#### Person-centered Planning in Postsecondary Transitions: Cultural Adaptation of the Progress in Preparing for Adulthood Provider Self-Assessment

Paula Thompson-Costello, OTD, OTR/L, Rush University, Lombard, IL

Contributing Authors: Katherine Cianella; Amanda Simon; Nicole Kiedysz; Sophia Armatas

We will share the phase one results of the cultural adaptation of a person-centered postsecondary transition planning self-assessment for provider teams and apply this information to participants' own fidelity to person-centered planning principles.



## Poster 111

### Supporting Self-Regulation Development in Children Impacted by Trauma

Jennifer Vaughn, OTD, OTR/L, Maple Valley Pediatric Therapy, Maple Valley, WA; Stephanie Bonk, OTD, OTR/L, Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, WI

Contributing Author: Bobbie Vergo

This project supports the use of self-regulation activity kits to provide purposeful, structured, and ready to implement activities to support development of emotional regulation skills in children impacted by trauma and homelessness.

## Poster 112

### Pediatric Behavioral Health Following Psychological Trauma

Patricia Precin, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Columbia University, New York, NY

Occupational therapy's role in school setting pediatric behavioral health following psychological trauma and resources for children who have experienced natural disasters, COVID-19, refugee camps, immigration, and seeking asylum will be presented.

## Poster 113

### Occupational Therapy's Role in Schools: A Survey of Occupational Therapy Practitioners

Deborah Zeitlin, OTD, OTR/L, Lincoln Memorial University, Knoxville, TN; Ryleigh Fritz; Caroline Clement; Halle Tackett; Ashlyn Case; Reagan Cook

Contributing Author: Elizabeth Schmidt, PhD, OTR/L

A nationwide survey was conducted to understand the roles and responsibilities of occupational therapy practitioners in school-based settings, including their interventions in elementary, middle, and high schools.

December 14, 2024

## Concurrent Sessions

8:00 am - 9:00 am

Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 201

#### Implementing School-Based Therapy Services at a Systems Level

Patricia Laverdure, OTD, OTR/L, BCP, FAOTA, Old Dominion University, Richmond, VA; Yvonne Swinth, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA  
School-based practitioners will explore ways to provide population or system-level services and establish tools that promote deliberative decision making, de-implementation of ineffective processes, change readiness, and goal prioritization.

Cirrus Ballroom

### Concurrent 202

#### The Vital Impact of Occupational Therapy on Infants and Toddlers

Jill Tonneman, OTR/L, BCP, Nationwide Childrens Hospital, Columbus, OH  
Contributing Author: Jessalyn Dickerson, MSOT, OTR/L

This course will highlight the crucial role occupational therapy plays in transdisciplinary early intervention. This will look at the specific skill sets of occupational therapy in early detection clinic and how they are a valuable part of the transdisciplinary team.

## Poster Session

9:15 am - 10:15 am

Metropolitan Foyer

### Poster 201

#### Interdisciplinary Constraint-Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT): An Innovative Intensive Approach

Carly Almy, OTR, PhD; Ty Falaja, BS, CPT, both of TIRR Memorial Hermann, Houston, TX

This poster presents an innovative approach to CIMT combining occupational therapy intervention with structured exercises provided by fitness specialists. The participant demonstrated considerable improvements in quality of upper extremity movement.

### Poster 204

#### Caregiver Connect: Supporting Caregiver Involvement in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to Enhance Bonding and Promote Engagement in Parenting Occupations

Sydney Fournier, University of Findlay, Findlay, OH

Contributing Author: Rebecca Herr, OTD, MOT, OTR/L

This capstone project focused on developing an occupation-based program to support caregivers' engagement in bonding and parenting occupations with medically complex infants to advance professional practice in the neonatal intensive care unit.

## Poster 205

### **LGBTQIA+ Youth and Occupational Therapy: Addressing Mental Health Concerns Beyond Acceptance**

Patricia Precin, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Columbia University, New York, NY

This poster will identify factors contributing to compromised mental health in the LGBTQIA+ youth population, the role of an occupational therapist in ameliorating mental health concerns, and strategies to improve mental health and well-being.

## Poster 206

### **Hydrotherapy in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: How Occupational Therapists Use Water to Facilitate Musculoskeletal and Neurobehavioral Development**

Caroline Philbeck, Presbyterian College, Clinton, SC

Contributing Authors: Rachel Crone; Courtney Kozar

The emerging practice of neonatal hydrotherapy has been evidenced to provide many benefits to preterm infants. Therapists combine aquatic principles with sensory motor intervention to further develop the musculoskeletal and neurobehavioral systems.

## Poster 207

### **Impact of Environment on Medically Complex Children Residing in a Transitional Care Unit: A Quality Improvement Study**

Paula Thompson-Costello, OTD, OTR/L; Marissa Matimore, both of Rush University, Chicago, IL

Results of a novel use of the Residential Environment Impact Scale (REIS) in a pediatric transitional care unit to assess the environment's impact on residents' occupational participation will be shared with application to other pediatric settings.

## Poster 208

### **An Innovative Virtual Approach to Evaluating Developmental Milestones in Infants With Complex Health Conditions**

Sandra Fucile, OT Reg (Ont), Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Contributing Authors: Laurie Snider; Lorraine Smith, OT Reg (Ont)

The virtual infant developmental abilities (VIDA) tool, is the first-ever online screening tool to increase access for many marginalized groups with limited means to participate in face-to-face occupational therapy follow-up care.

## Poster 209

### **Using Movement to Support Regulation and Engagement in Children**

Pamela Larson, OTD, OTR/L, Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, WI; Stephanie Bonk, OTD, OTR/L, Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, WI

Contributing Author: Meghan Watry-Christian, PhD, OT/L

This project shows the benefits of using strategies and resources to facilitate incorporation of movement for children to support attention and regulation for improved occupational engagement and participation in after-school and summer programs.

## Poster 210

### **Utilizing Nature in Pediatric Occupational Therapy Interventions: Enhancing Children's Well-being Through Sensory-Rich Play Exploration**

Jaymie Hughes, Presbyterian College, Clinton, SC

Contributing Authors: Lauren Perry, MS, OTR/L; Monica Keen

Expanding treatment into a sensory-rich nature-based environment can increase emotional regulation, play participation, and play exploration, enhancing children's health and well-being and improving patient outcomes in occupational therapy.

## Poster 211

### **Navigating Health Care Among Canadians With Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) During Transitions to Adulthood**

Paige Kavanaugh, MA, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Contributing Author: Parisa Ghanouni, PhD

This study examines the challenges faced by youth with ASD and their families during the transition to adulthood, focusing on health care navigation. Insights inform occupational therapy services and improve health care transitions for youth with ASD.

## Poster 212

### **Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) Interventions With Relevance to Occupational Therapy**

Alyssa Beck; Madison Cate, both of University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA; Savanna Girouard; Emily Whybark

Contributing Authors: Aimee Sidhu, OTD, MA, OTR/L; Renee Watling, PhD, FAOTA

Occupational therapy practitioners seek to determine evidence-based practices for children with ARFID and be included within the multidisciplinary team. Interventions with relevance to occupational therapy were found to increase positive feeding outcomes.



## Poster 213

### **Empowering Parents: An Educational Approach to Enhancing Outcomes for Parents Who Are Raising a Child With Additional Needs**

Rhea Florez, AT Still University, Mesa, AZ  
Contributing Authors: Abbey Glenn, OTD, OTR/L, BCG, CBIS; Briana Bonner, OTD, OTR/L

This session presents a capstone project on parental education and children with additional needs. Attendees will gain evidence-based strategies to enhance parental involvement, advancing both professional practice and outcomes in occupational therapy.

## Concurrent Sessions

10:30 am - 11:30 am

Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 203

#### **Transition Planning and Mental Health for Rising Fifth Grade Students: An Occupational Therapy Approach**

Stephen Pitts, DrOT, OTR/L, Nova Southeastern University, Davie, FL

A transition program for rising sixth graders supports self-efficacy, mental health, and independence through academic workshops, peer support groups, and mindfulness practices to ease the transition from elementary to middle school.

Cirrus Ballroom

### Concurrent 204

#### **Food Talk: The Power of Words in Pediatric Therapy**

Alison Ulie; Alyssa Van Vossen, both of The TEAM Approach, Houston, TX

This presentation outlines the importance of considering and understand-

ing the role that occupational therapists play when addressing food and eating around impressionable youth through discussing the significance of mindful language when working with this population.

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 205

#### **ABCs of Education Policy: Opportunities and Impacts on School System Practice**

Moiria Bushell, OTD, MEd, OTR/L, BCP, Exceptional Learners Collaborative, Vernon Hills, IL

With a better understanding of laws and regulations that apply to education, occupational therapy practitioners can have a greater role in key conversations about their students. The impact of ESSA, IDEA, ADA, and education case law on occupational therapy practice will be discussed.

Cirrus Ballroom

### Concurrent 206

#### **The Power of Connection: Sensory and Affective Interventions**

Amy Lewis, OTR/L; Heather Spann, MSR, OTR/L, both of Powerfully You LLC, Charleston, SC

Let's go beyond 'Is it sensory or is it behavior?' by examining the dual coding of sensory integrative and affective processing. We will explore connection strategies and the neuroscience that underlies why they are effective and necessary.

2:15 pm - 3:15 pm

Metropolitan Ballroom

### Concurrent 207

#### **Building A Collaborative Assistive Technology Team to Facilitate Success Beyond the Therapy Session**

Michelle Hillenbrand, OTR/L; April Perry, MA, CCC-SLP, ATP, both of Henderson County Schools, Henderson, KY

Incorporating assistive technology into a child's education is best achieved through a multidisciplinary team approach to empower and equip the student and caregivers with the tools needed to access their environment, learn, and grow.

Cirrus Ballroom

Cancelled by Speaker  
Concurrent 208

## Closing

3:30 pm - 4:15 pm

Metropolitan Ballroom

#### **AI Meets QI: Examining the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence to Manage Workload Demands in a Pediatric Therapy Practice**

Kimberly Krebs, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT; Laurelle Montagne

Ethical and efficient generative artificial intelligence technology solutions were piloted to help manage workload demands in a pediatric therapy clinic. Attendees will consider how these solutions may support their responsibilities and productivity.



# Thank You!

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