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Developmental Stepping Stones

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Developmental Stepping Stones

Couri S. Taylor, M.S., OTR/L

A Capstone Project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Post-Professional Doctor of
Occupational Therapy (Dr.OT) Degree at Nova Southeastern University

Dr. Pallavi Patel College of Health Care Services

Department of Occupational Therapy

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Acknowledgments

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Abstract

Background: Healthy child development is imperative for future success, parents/caregivers are at the helm of guiding children down a path that supports health and wellbeing for future success. When there is a lack of education, information, and resources readily available to families there is a risk for delayed development and lack of engagement. For many of our clients, health literacy is low, vulnerability is high, and they often feel cornered with no other available choices. Making it easier not to engage in certain activities, due to lack of opportunities, resources, and/or education. This lack of participation has a significant impact on performance, if those individuals of lower socio-economic backgrounds are never given the opportunity, how can we expect them to perform to current standards. Against all odds, many individuals make a way, but at what cost to their mental, physical, and social health.

Purpose: The purpose of this capstone sought to fill the gap in parental knowledge surrounding developmental milestones by creating a media-based program to address the identified needs of the community to prevent developmental delays and major impacts to a child's health and wellbeing.

Methods: The capstone student developed a series of podcasts to educate and engage the community in a high quality, free, easily accessible form of media to promote healthy engagement within the community (through resources) and learning related to healthy child development. This podcast, titled the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast, provided education on healthy child development for parents, caregivers and local early learning centers of children birth through 5 years of age. Included were strategies to promote healthy engagement with the child, education on healthy child development and easily accessible resources within the community. Each podcast was delivered through various media platforms on a weekly schedule

In addition, a six question survey related to the podcast was made available after each episode via a link in the description of the episode.

Results: The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast received positive feedback from survey respondents/listeners, all survey participants identified that the podcasts were beneficial in increasing their knowledge surrounding healthy child development and provided more ways to engage with their child, increased their awareness about accessible community resources, and was an enjoyable listening experience.

Conclusion: Results affirmed The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcasts evidence-based approach to educating parents and caregivers about healthy child development. Providing brief educational podcasts of 15 minutes or less about healthy child development, strategies for healthy child engagement and community resources are beneficial to parents, caregivers, and teachers.

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Chapter I

Introduction and Purpose

Parents play an essential role in the healthy developmental of their child, supporting their child through the many occupations their minds and bodies experiences throughout their day. Research has shown that the earliest years of a child's life are extremely important in building a solid foundation for their health, development, and wellbeing (cdc.gov, 2019). Healthy child development for children of all abilities, including those with special health needs means that children are given the opportunity to grow up where their social, emotional, and educational needs are met (cdc.gov, 2019). There are many factors that can contribute to healthy child development, playing, singing, reading, and talking are important components of early childhood. Without these important opportunities to engage, there is a possibility for delays in a child's development, where children miss crucial components in there developmental steppingstones to future success. With the knowledge of this crucial information and the important role that parents play in the lives of young children, it is imperative that support and information is provided to parents/caregivers to assist them in the process of raising and nurturing a happy, healthy child.

Purpose

Research has shown, that with the proper support and education provided to parents surrounding child development, parents will develop the ability to respond positively within their parental roles, thus encouraging optimal development in their children (Zand et al., 2015). This capstone seeks to fill the gap in parental knowledge surrounding developmental milestones, creating a program to address the identified needs of the community to aid in prevention of developmental delays and/or early identification for increased future success.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Importance of Developmental Milestones

Developmental milestones are physical, social, and emotional skills seen in infants and children as they learn and grow. Skills such as crawling, taking a first step, saying a first word, smiling for the first time, and dressing independently are all examples of developmental milestones. Every child reaches milestones in how they play, learn, speak, behave, and move (cdc.gov, 2019). It is important to note that all children develop at their own pace, making it impossible to pinpoint exactly when a given skill will appear or be learned. Nonetheless, developmental milestones serve as a general idea of when changes can be expected to occur as children age (cdc.org, 2019). Developmental milestones and the general path they take are good indicators of typical development, typically the first indicators of delays in development are missed developmental milestones.

Missing a developmental milestone during childhood does not automatically indicate a delay but should trigger a response to take a closer look at how the child is developing and seek additional assistance from their pediatrician or developmental specialist if necessary. If early developmental milestones are not solidly in place, it is likely that a delay can and will develop, placing a child at risk. By detecting small gaps in early development skills, parents and/or caregivers will have the ability to get extra help and support, in addition to supporting their child's development before delays become significant and impact future success (firstwordsproject.com, 2017). Issues arise when parents/caregivers are not aware of how or when certain developmental milestones are set to occur in their child's life and that developmental milestones are a good indicator of future skill development. This lack of knowledge surrounding developmental milestones could be due to culture, education, access to

care, and availability of community programming among other issues. While exploring the literature, education was a topic of concern that continually showed up. Education is an important cornerstone of development with parents being the most important teachers in a child's life. Without the proper education on child development, it is likely that delays in development are liable to be missed or overlooked. McMillian et al. (2015) conducted a study focused on parental knowledge of child development, it was found that parents were likely to overlook a child's developmental abilities, suggesting that parents were not properly equipped to provide their children with enough developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.

The importance of education about child development and milestones was further expressed by McMillian et al. (2015), as additional findings of the study suggested that education played an important role in guiding parental decisions related to their child's health, allowed parents to effectively use available child services, aided in illness prevention, and increased confidence for when to seek additional assistance. Zand et al. (2015) supported the fact that education plays an important role in child development, they found that increased parental knowledge surrounding child development and developmental milestones, increased parents' response to their child and fostered optimal development.

The Role of Media in Parent Education and Health Promotion

Fostering optimal development during childhood is an essential role that parents have in their child's life. Utilizing the knowledge, they have, parents go about imparting this knowledge on their child to aid in obtaining new skills, exploring new environments, and creating new memories. The issue arises when parents are not properly equipped with the essential information needed to aid their child in developing the skills and hitting the milestones that are needed to improve future success. There are many ways in which parents obtain information

related to child development, with research stating parents typically garner information from doctors, nurses, spouses, grandparents and aunts and uncles (Rowe et al., 2015). Newer research suggests that parents have begun to branch out from these methods, exploring new media options when seeking child development information. Raines and Robinson (2020) conducted a cohort study with 200 participants to determine which modality for educational materials that new mothers preferred. The researchers found that new parents preferred technology-based patient education materials related to their infants. This allowed parents to review the information as often as needed, enhanced learning and adaptation of new behaviors by parents when engaging with their child and allowed parents to become advocates for their children's health and wellbeing by sharing the information with other caregivers of their child (Raines and Robinson, 2020). In addition, Raines and Robinson (2020) suggested that technology-based methods be used to engage parents in effective parent education, stating that adults are self-motivated learners and learn more from materials that are available in a format consistent with popular forms of media. Additionally, Johnson et al. (2016) emphasized that parents and caregivers believe that educational media and/or technology can be beneficial to their child's development.

In the digital age of 2020, more than 300 million families are currently living in a household that has some form of digital technology (television, smart phone, computer, and/or tablet), making it the most ubiquitous way to reach their learning minds. In 2016, Johnson et al. published an article that identified the importance of engaging families in high quality learning experiences that will increase their abilities to foster growth within their children and support school readiness. These learning experiences are imperative to later success, especially in those households of America's most vulnerable children. Implementing a program such as the Developmental Stepping Stones, allows for crucial development information to reach families in

need and provide valuable information to parents, teachers, caregivers and those within the community who need it most.

With the cumulation of information supporting the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast, it is imperative that this information reaches the community in a meaningful and purposeful way to aid in prevention of children “falling between the cracks” and to aid in the health and wellbeing of those community members who are in underserved populations. Promotion of the podcast typically happens through community partnerships with local early learning centers. This allows The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast to reach the target population in their environment and within their comfort zone. Through partnership with at least one early learning center, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast will promote upcoming episodes, field reviews of the presented topics and continue to improve on the format and presentation of the information based on feedback from community members.

In 2019, a local Early Childhood Development (ECD) Program reported that over 80% of its cases for children who had scored low on their developmental screeners, had received parental decline for care coordination and referral services (S.Milan, personal communication, February 10, 2020). This number is astounding and speaks to the need for education about child health and development, in addition to services that are easily accessible, high quality, within the community, and unique within the targeted community. The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast seeks to do just that, in collaboration with diverse community partners (early learning centers, local experts) and using information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) “Learn the Signs, Act Early Program”, parents/caregivers will gain knowledge, awareness of developmental milestones and take action when there is a concern (cdc.gov, 2020).

Further Support for Educating Parents/Caregivers on Developmental Milestones Incorporation of the CDC's Learn the Signs, Act Early Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed a program entitled “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Which aims to improve early detection of developmental disabilities and autism (cdc.gov, 2020). The “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Program provides a wealth of information for families to assist them in getting services and support that they need in navigating various health care systems and settings. Additionally, the CDC provides support and supplemental materials for healthcare providers, therapists, and partners to assist in developmental screening, educating various communities on developmental milestones and the importance it plays in a child’s life, and the CDC also provides checklists, resources and ways to implement the program in the community (cdc.gov, 2020). The “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Program aligns nicely with the program objectives and goals of the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast, both aiming to educate parents and caregivers in the importance of developmental milestones, promote health and wellness and prevention. With the wealth of information provided through the CDC’s program, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast uses the program as the foundation for supporting and educating parents/caregivers on their child’s development, ways to address any noted concerns, and available community resources related to child’s development.

The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast utilizes the CDC’s program as a foundation to develop podcast topics and guide parents through the many processes involved in child development and navigating community resources that are available to them within their given community. Podcasting was chosen as the platform for delivering information to parents/caregivers based on the amount of evidence surrounding the use of transmedia in

education. Johnson et al. (2016) stated that the learning ecosystem has expanded within the past few years, to include learning avenues such as television, mobile apps, eBooks, interactive toys and other smart devices. The inclusion of a transmedia platform for learning uses a new strategy that builds on a strong foundation of other trans media platforms to elicit positive interactions and ease of access from and for parents. In addition to the evidence supporting the use of media in learning, through a community needs assessment, the program developer identified a gap in knowledge about child developmental milestones. This gap in knowledge has a negative impact on parents' interactions with a local early childhood development program. The local early childhood development program had reported an 80% decline rate for developmental services from parents in 2019. Although children had been identified as having "concerns" in at least one out of the 5 developmental categories assessed, parents tended to decline any developmental services/follow up due to lack of knowledge on what their child should be doing at what age.

With this crucial information, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast fills a void within the identified communities to aid in prevention, education, and promoting health and wellness. The communities are primarily composed of low-income families who have been historically provided with less access to quality care and tend to lack resources, knowledge and supports to effectively engage within their community. The reality of today's world is that occupational and societal injustices exist. Individuals are classified and judged based on several factors, some being, where they come from, how old they are, and how they live. The World Health Organization (WHO) considers these factors to be social determinants of health and identifies them as shaping how an individual experiences life on a global, national, and local level. Unfortunately, there are systems in place that shape the conditions of daily life for many individuals of lower socio-economic status (SES). Economic policies, social norms, and political

systems continue to prevent those of lower SES from “gaining access to or participating in education, training, and citizen activities because of racism, discrimination, stigmatization, hostility, and unemployment” (Wilcock and Hocking, 2015, p.159). This form of occupational injustice is rampant throughout the nation, excluding and discriminating against those from certain social groups. This form of exclusion has a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals within these particular social groups, contributing to illness and death. It is evident that societal issues influence occupational participation and performance, impacting access to quality healthcare, causing hardship and resentment within these social groups.

The impact on occupational performance within the many roles that parents/caregivers take on can be detrimental to engagement. Engagement in occupations shape identities, through doing of occupations an individual learns about themselves, builds self-esteem, and develops a sense of belonging. These are all essential parts of health and wellbeing and are shaped by inclusion in meaningful occupations that allow individuals to contribute and develop their potential (Braveman & Suarez-Balcazar, 2009). When a parent/caregiver’s occupational performance and engagement are impacted difficulties arise in parenting and trickle down to their child’s development. With a program such as the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast, parents/caregivers will be provided the opportunity to gain information in a way that promotes ease of access, doesn’t take up much of their time, links them to quality health care information and is preventative in nature. Each podcast topic is related to areas that the CDC has identified as a necessity for parents/caregivers and include community resources, linking care for those most in need.

Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast/Programming

Educating parents and caregivers, supporting them in developing effective parenting skills and utilization of strategies to engage their child in activities that not only promotes healthy development but also makes engagement meaningful and purposeful for all parties involved. There is no better time than the present to address the identified need of parents desire for greater ease of access to quality education about healthy child development within the community by establishing a program that specifically targets the community members, parents and caregiver. With an estimated 16 million children living in poverty and 54% of those children being unable to participate in any type of early schooling, it is imperative that parents have easy access to high quality learning that can empower them to be their child's biggest advocate (Johnson et al., 2016). Careful review of the literature indicates the importance of parent involvement in child development and detection of any developmental delays early. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) states that a missed developmental milestone would be a sign of future problems, putting parents as the first line of defense in early detection of developmental concerns. With the proper education and support, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast and supporting programming can assist parents and community members in decreasing the number of children who go unidentified and build confidence in parents, caregivers, teacher and other stakeholders to engage in critical consciousness With the research supporting parent knowledge and their role as first responders, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast (DSSP) seeks to provide an easily accessible form of media for parents, community members, and early learning centers to utilize to obtain information regarding child development, in addition to methods/information/ways necessary to address any concerns if noted within their community in South Florida.

Kindergarten readiness and prevention serves as key goals of the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast (DSSP). Upon entering Kindergarten, research has shown that those children who are ready to learn and have been prepared to learn have an easier time integrating into the learning environment and succeeding within the classroom (mayoclinic.org, 2020). In addition to Kindergarten readiness, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast seeks to provide an easily accessible form of media for parents, caregivers, community members and early learning centers regarding child development and milestones. Seeking to positively impact the community through translation of essential information related to child development, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast will provide support and knowledge about healthy child development to the targeted population to promote confidence in providing developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for their children's health and wellbeing.

In addition to Kindergarten readiness, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast aims to increase awareness of child developmental milestones and assist in identification of early warning signs of developmental delays (Raspa et al., 2015). Knowledge of healthy child development is important in supporting parents to develop school readiness within their child/children but it is also important for giving parent the language needed to confidently speak with their child's health care providers and caregivers (Raspa et al., 2015). In a study conducted by Raspa et al. (2015) the researchers found that parents appreciated being provided with information and materials related to child development and found it to be helpful in speaking to pediatrician, identifying any delays and acting early. Also, Raspa et al. (2015) found that although parents appreciated receiving this type of information, parents wanted more information surrounding a) why they should act early, the importance behind it, b) information on available

local early intervention services, c) how to talk to their child's doctor, and d) additional outreach to families of socioeconomic backgrounds.

Targeted Population for Programming

Parents and caregivers are the targeted population for the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast, when considering this special group of individuals, care must be taken to examine and consider the social determinants of the population in addition to the socioeconomic status. The World Health Organization (2019) considers social determinants of health to be conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. Historically, these social circumstances are shaped by power, money distribution, and resources at global, national, and local levels (who.int, 2019). Conversely, social determinants of health impact an individual's socioeconomic status, the amount of money, power, and resources to which a person has access. Together, these social factors of health have a significant impact on the health and well-being of people and the communities with whom they interact (cdc.gov, 2020). Zuckerman et al. (2018) assessed parent's familiarity with early signs of developmental delays in low-income families with 539 participants. The study found that low-income families of Latino and other races demonstrated less familiarity or personal experiences with developmental delays and less aware of early signs of developmental delays (Zuckerman et al., 2018). Suggestions from the study's findings support implementation of interventions that focus on reducing health disparities, including increasing the transfer of information specifically to parents/families in racial/ethnic and language minority communities (Zuckerman et al., 2018).

Similarly, September et al. (2015) conducted a study of 140 parents of children between the ages of two and five years of age, with a focus on the role socioeconomic status played in parents' knowledge of child development. The sample of participants included parents from low

and high socioeconomic groups, researchers compared the relationship between parenting styles and knowledge of child development. Findings from the study indicated that parenting styles were not directly correlated with knowledge of child development milestones but that correlations existed between socioeconomic status and knowledge of developmental milestones (September et al, 2015). Researchers from the study recommended that those with access to parents seize the opportunity to educate parents on the norms and milestones associated with a developing child. In further support, Rowe et al. (2015), conducted a review of data from 6,150 participants, examining the role of parent education and knowledge in the development of language and literacy skills among White, Black, and Latino families. Researchers found that parenting knowledge is directly related to child development and skill attainment (Rowe et al., 2015). Also, findings suggested that parents from Black and Latino backgrounds, typically of a lower socioeconomic status than their White counterparts had lower levels of education and knowledge in child development. This contributed to parents of lower socioeconomic status being less engaged with their child during early childhood, providing less higher-level language and literacy activities, which impacted development in those areas.

Socioeconomic status, as suggested through the research appears to have a direct correlation on child development due to parental education levels and knowledge surrounding child development. In addition, research has shown that some parents are unaware of the importance early childhood development plays in future success (Zuckerman et al., 2018). These types of findings support the development of early childhood programming that encourages and uplifts parents in obtaining knowledge surrounding child development. Using the knowledge by incorporating local early learning services information and to cultivate critical consciousness

surrounding the topic may promote confidence for parents to reach out regarding a potential concern/delay with their child/children.

Health Promotion and Prevention

Developing program supports for parents to gain knowledge about healthy childhood development is an essential component of the proposed programming, and an essential component in the practice of occupational therapy in pediatrics. Occupational therapists promote client education and support engagement in occupations that are meaningful and purposeful to the individual. Understanding the complex and dynamic interactions parents may have with their environments and the activities they need to accomplish in their daily lives (aota.org, 2019) is essential. Engagement in these occupations shapes identities, promotes self-awareness and personal insight, builds self-esteem, develops a sense of belonging, and experiences becoming the fullness of their personhood. These are all essential parts of health and wellbeing and are shaped by inclusion in meaningful occupations that allow individuals to contribute to community, family and develop their potential (Braveman & Suarez-Balcazar, 2009). In 2009, Phelan and Kinsella wrote occupational identity, explaining that this defines who an individual will become through occupational participation. Engagement in occupations that are meaningful and purposeful to the individual creates a sense of purpose and builds confidence in their abilities to complete tasks and successfully contribute to their communities and child's life.

Integration of Information/Theory/Model

With occupations being at the center of how individuals thrive and engage in meaningful activities, it is imperative that when proposing to engage parents in effective education related to child development, that care is taken to consider guiding theoretical practices to support and

guide the process. For the purposes of engaging parents, caregivers, and community members, the Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance (PEOP) Model will guide the way for sharing knowledge. The PEOP Model will provide the framework for applying theory in practice, the specific theory recognizes the value and characteristics of occupation within a developmental perspective. Theory is designed to structure observations, understandings, and explanations of the world, allowing the professional to organize their knowledge base and guide practice (Walker & Ludwig, 2004). Successful engagement of parents, caregivers, and community members in programming, requires client centered practice, through gathering information into why people do what they do guided by the framework of the PEOP model (Bass et al., 2015). In addition, factors related to the person, environment, occupations, and performance aids in program development that sustains health and wellbeing. With health, wellbeing, health promotion and prevention being at the forefront of programming, the PEOP allows for a narrative perspective, from the parents, and caregivers during the implementation and planning phases to impact programming. Through the gathering of narrative feedback, programming will be meaningful and purposeful to each participating individual and may be tailored to specific requests.

Serving the Community Through Programming

Through thorough review of the literature, overwhelming information has been provided to support programming that focuses on educating parents on child development and milestones. Through community observations and interviews, The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast seeks to provide a digital experience that is easily accessible for parents, community members and caregivers to utilize in obtaining information regarding child development and milestones. The number of children who go without services or guidance due to parent decline in early intervention services, taking the “wait and see” approach, or lack of knowledge surrounding

development is detrimental to our future as a community. Children are the future, the next in line to lead and make change in the world, with proper guidance from their parents, children can develop in an environment that fosters positive growth and healthy development. There is a need for education surrounding child health and development, in addition to services that are easily accessible, high quality, within the community, and unique. The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast/Programming seeks to fill the void, promote ease of access, and educate parents and the community in an area that is critical to future success, health and wellbeing of all involved.

There has never been a time, better than the present to establish a program that specifically targets the parents, community members and the early learning/ development community. With an estimated 16 million children living in poverty and 54% of those children being unable to participate in any type of early schooling, it is imperative that parents have easy access to high quality learning that can empower them to be their child's biggest advocate (Johnson et al., 2016). Careful review of the literature indicates the importance of parent involvement in child development and detection of any developmental delays early. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) states that a missed developmental milestone would be a sign of future problems, putting parents as the first line of defense in early detection of developmental concerns. With the proper education and support, The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast and support program can assist parents and caregivers (teachers, extended family members) in decreasing the number of children who go unidentified and build confidence in parents, caregivers, teacher and other stakeholders to engage in critical consciousness surrounding this topic, empowering the community to support the future leaders of tomorrow. With the research supporting parent knowledge and their role as first responders, The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast (DSSP) seeks to provide an easily accessible form of

media for parents, community members, and early learning centers to utilize in obtaining information regarding child development, in addition to methods/information/ways necessary to address any concerns if noted and access community resources.

Needs Assessment and Findings

During a community needs assessment, where stakeholders were observed and interviewed, it became evident that there was a lack of knowledge regarding available resources, child development and milestones, and many parental stakeholders who take the “wait and see approach.” The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast seeks to empower the community and decrease fears around developmental delays, early intervention, and access to care, through easy to access media content. Johnson et al. (2016) stated that today’s media landscape allows for technology choices such as podcasts to spark interest amongst digitally savvy families, allowing for information to be delivered in a succinct and effortless way, easily meshing into family’s lives. The current problem will only get worse if not properly addressed in a manner that is non threatening and easy to understand for all who wish to access it.

Initial community needs assessments were conducted with community stakeholders (program administrators, teachers, parents, and caregivers) via interviews and observations. During these community needs assessments, where stakeholders were observed and interviewed, it became evident that there was a lack of knowledge regarding available resources, child development and milestones, and many parental stakeholders who take the “wait and see approach.” Through engagement in interviews and observations, several wants, and needs were identified, an overwhelming number of individuals expressed their lack of knowledge surrounding developmental milestones and how they impact a child’s future development. In addition, when speaking with several families, they expressed the want/need to understand the

developmental process/stages children go through and stakeholders were also interested in strategies that can easily fit into their daily life activities to promote development. Along with seeking the meaning of developmental milestones many families asked for assistance with locating community resources, such as a) doctors' offices, b) free clinics, c) transportation services, d) weekend activities and e) how to obtain referrals or get their child the assistance they need in school.

Viewing the identified wants and needs from an occupational therapy point of view, an important factor in addressing community needs means to also address the long-term health requirements of the people and assist them in developing healthy habits and behaviors (Baum & Law, 1996). Focusing on the occupational performance aspects of the community stakeholders allows the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast to integrate a range of services that promotes, protects, and improves the health of the target population (children, parents, teacher and caregivers) with a reach far beyond the identified population (Baum & Law, 1996). Through the initial community needs assessment there was a clear need to encourage community members, teachers and administrators to become actively involved and engaged in their life activities, taking a form a responsibility for their health and wellbeing alongside the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast. Active engagement of parents and caregivers in a child's life has been shown to have positive effects on development, social skills, school participation and future success among many other factors (Kato et al., 2017). The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast seeks to encourage this active engagement, reaching this underserved population by providing critical developmental information in an easy to access format to empower, support, and promote prevention, health and wellbeing throughout the community.

Exploring the Literature

Exploring the literature is significant in obtaining evidence-based means to addressing the identified needs and wants that have been identified through the community needs assessments. In support of the identified program, Marshall et al. (2016) examined influences, factors, and processes associated with parental recognition and knowledge of any developmental concerns of young children with signs of developmental delay or behavioral issues. It was found that only 20% of parents expressed some form of concern with their child and an overwhelming 50-65% lacked any knowledge of typical child development (Marshall et al., 2016). Questions arose from parents during this study inquiring about what age a child should begin talking, what is considered age-appropriate development and when is it extreme. Most parents that participated in this study stated that their knowledge of child development was rooted in previous parenting experiences. In addition to lack of knowledge surrounding childhood developmental milestones or just overall development, Marshall et al. (2016) noted that parents stated they went through a period of deciding whether the difference they noted in development was worth reporting or if it would improve on its own.

Additional literature on the topic of concern noted similarities. Zuckerman et al. (2018) conducted a cross-sectional survey of lower income families and found that most parents stated they were not familiar with developmental milestones or delays. Study participants were primarily minority (Hispanic) and results were compared with responses from non-Latino-white parents. Additional findings of this study suggested that Latino parents were less educated on developmental delays and had a higher incidence of non-reporting when concerns were evident in their child. Zuckerman et al. (2018) concluded that improvement was needed in providing information to parents, which should be done in a non-print form. In further support, a cluster

randomized trial was conducted by Chang et al (2015) which highlighted the importance of a parent training program on child development. The concern noted in this study related to the overwhelming number of children who do not attain their developmental potential (200 million globally) (Chang et al., 2015). This study identified a lack of stimulating caregiving that can be related to lack of knowledge surrounding child development and the importance it plays in future success and parent contribution to this success. The parent training program consisted of short films of child development messages that were shown in the waiting rooms of their pediatrician's office. Information was provided to parents in a non-paper format and parents were given the opportunity to discuss any concerns with researchers during the process. Also, demonstrations of age-appropriate activities were led by community health workers to support the provided information. The study concluded that providing parenting knowledge and intervention integrated into health services were beneficial to child cognitive development and parent knowledge (Chang et al., 2015).

Chapter III: Method

Methodology

After careful exploration of the literature and through needs assessment, the wants and needs of the target population were identified. Parents, teachers, and caregivers have expressed their lack of knowledge regarding child development and requested additional information surrounding the topic and ways they can access care to address the need. Specifically, parents, teachers, and caregivers expressed a want for education on developmental milestones, community resources, typical development, and developmental expectations regarding motor skills, language and play etc.

Plan/Approach/Design for Program Development

To support parents, teachers, and caregivers in this process of gaining knowledge and building confidence in advocating for their children, a support program was developed to address the need, promote health and wellbeing, in addition to prevention. The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast is dedicated to teaching and engaging/involving the community in an easily accessible form of media to promote healthy engagement within the community (through resources) and learning related to child development. In addition, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast strives to provide high quality learning experiences that are free to the community, focuses on preventative information and ways for caregivers and children to engage together. Experienced occupational therapists, social workers, and those with educational backgrounds will serve as the vessels for delivering this vital information to the communities of Miami Dade and Broward counties, with hopes to expand worldwide by 2022. The primary mode of delivering developmental information to the community, will be through podcasting, which is a type of transmedia/cross platform learning which is easily accessible through mobile phones, computers and/or tablets.

The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast is geared towards educating parents, teachers, and caregivers on the developmental milestones and the importance they play in a child's future successes, in and out of school. The primary platform to access the podcast will be through YouTube with plans to expand to Spotify and Apple's Podcast platform, each recorded episode aims to be between 15 and 20 minutes and will be available to anyone who seeks to gain knowledge regarding child developmental milestones. Additionally, parents, teachers, and caregivers and those who listen to the podcast will be provided the opportunity to rate/review the podcasts effectiveness and provide recommendations for improvement for future episodes.

After careful research and consideration of the wants and needs expressed by the target population, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast program developer decided to address several topics related to child development. Topics include a) overview of the basics of development, b) importance development plays in a child's life, c) tips on what to do when a concerns is suspected, d) conversation on ways to talk with child's pediatrician, e) importance of tracking developmental milestones, and f) available local resources.

Program Development: Podcast Topics

The sequence of topics listed below, and the specific topics were chosen based on findings from the CDC and their "Learn the Signs. Act Early" program.

Podcast One: What are developmental milestones and why are they important?

As an introduction to the podcast and to guide the future topics, the program developer provided education to the listeners about child developmental milestones, delving into the importance of healthy development and how that looks for a child as they grow. This introductory episode allowed the program developer to establish the flow of the podcast and cover the developmental milestone basics, such as tummy time, crawling, playing, and learning to communicate. These important motor, cognitive and behavioral skills play an important role in a child's development and The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast will assist parents in gaining the knowledge necessary to give them confidence in better understanding their child's developmental needs.

Talking Points

- Introduce self and some educational background, welcome parents.
- Review healthy development.

- Early years of child's life are very important for their health and development.
- Health development means that all children can grow up with their emotional, social, and educational needs met.
- Safe and loving home, spending time with family, playing, singing, reading, and talking are very important.
- Healthy development includes proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep.
- Effective parenting practices
 - Although every household will differ in how they parent their children, parenting takes many different forms.
 - Some positive parenting practices work well across many households and settings.
 - These key parenting practice recommendations have been reported through evidence in scientific publications to work in supporting a child's healthy development.
 - Responding to children in a predictable way (provide example)
 - Showing warmth and sensitivity
 - Having routines and household rules
 - Sharing books and talking with children
 - Supporting health and safety
 - Using appropriate discipline without harshness
- Development Milestones
 - Developmental milestones are skills such as first steps, crawling, first words, waving "bye bye", smiling for the first time.

- Children can reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, behave, and move.
- Parents know their child best.
- Children develop at their own pace however the developmental milestones give a general idea of the changes to expect as a child gets older.
- If you child is not meeting the milestones for their age or you suspect there may be an issue in development, talk with your child’s doctor regarding these concerns.
- Local community resources
 - Citrus Health Network
 - Help Me Grow (South Florida)
- Contact information

Podcast Two: I am concerned, what should I do?

Parents know their children best, if a parent suspects that their child is not meeting the milestone for their age or if there are concerns in the way their child plays, speaks, learns, acts, and moves. The parent should reach out to their child’s pediatrician and express those concerns. In addition to the child’s pediatrician, the parent can also complete a milestone checklist (provided on website), this will allow for parents to track child’s progress and have a record of things to discuss with their pediatrician. Lastly, parents can ask about developmental screening which are standardized, validated tools that assess children at ages 9, 18, or 30 months with screening for Autism at 18 and 24 months. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests these recommendations to get started with addressing any concerns parents have regarding the development of their child/children.

In addition to talking with the pediatrician, completing a milestone checklist and/or conducting developmental screening, parents also need support in talking to their providers/pediatricians. The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast explores the topic of talking to the doctor about developmental concerns, things to say when calling the doctor's office, how to reach the early intervention programs or speak with your child's school about any concerns a parent may have.

Talking Points

- Introduce self and welcome parents/listeners to second episode.
- Discuss available developmental milestone checklists and how they are beneficial in using to discuss concerns with their child's pediatrician.
- Following the CDC guidelines, discuss the four suggested steps on "how to get help for your child."
 - Make an appointment with your child's doctor.
 - Complete a milestone checklist.
 - During the doctor's appointment, show the checklist, ask about development screening, and ask if further evaluation is suggested.
- Make sure parents understand what the doctor is telling them and next steps.
- Review developmental screening.
 - The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screen for general development using tools that are standardized and validated.

- Starting at 9 months and revisiting at 18, 20 and if concerns are related to Autism, screening is available at 18 and 24 months of whenever parent has a concern.
- In addition, as a local resource, parents/families that are receiving school readiness funding through the Early Learning Coalition are eligible for screening and their child is automatically screened when entering a new school or near their birthday.
- If a parent/family is not receiving funding through school readiness/Early Learning Coalition, there is a free resource available through Easter seals which is called the Ages & Stages Questionnaire.
- Discuss the Ages & Stages Questionnaire and how it screens for general developmental concerns.

Podcast Three: Why act early?

The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast explores the topic of acting early on any developmental concerns a parent or caregiver may have. Parents/caregivers will be educated on the importance of acting early and how this act can have a meaningful impact on them and their child. As stated before, parents know their child/children best, taking the first step to address a concern is typically one of the hardest steps in the process. With the assistance of the Developmental Stepping Stone Podcast, parent/caregivers will be given guidance on the importance of early intervention, how it improve a child's abilities and helps them learn new skills.

Talking Points

- Introduce self and welcome parents/listeners to third episode, invite them to listen to previous episodes.
- The CDC recommends that parents/caregivers act early on developmental concerns to make a real difference for their child and them.
- If you're concerned about your child's development, don't wait, you know your child best.
- Discussion about early intervention
 - Early intervention helps children improve their abilities and learn new skills.
 - Early intervention is a term used to describe services and supports that are available to infants, toddlers, and children with developmental delays and/or disabilities and their families.
 - Early intervention can include occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, and infant toddler developmental specialist services.
 - Every state offers programs geared towards addressing developmental concerns in young children, these programs are often publicly funded and provide services free or at a reduced cost for any eligible child.
- Importance of acting early
 - How early intervention plays a key role in helping children meet milestones and prevention of further delays which can make it harder for children to succeed as they get older.
 - Early intervention is likely to be more effective when it is provided earlier in life rather than later (ectacenter.org, 2011)

Podcast Four: Exploring Healthy Child Development, Seven to Nine Months

For the remainder of the podcast episodes, the Developmental Stepping Stones explores healthy child development related to different age groups. For podcast four, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast quickly reviews the previous episodes topics and child developmental milestones then go forth with a review of healthy child development for children in the age group seven to nine months.

Talking Points

- Introduce self and welcome parents/listeners to third episode, invite them to listen to previous episodes.
- The CDC recommends that parents/caregivers act early on developmental concerns to make a real difference for their child and them.
- If you are concerned about your child's development, do not wait, you know your child best.
- Remind listeners that all children develop at a different pace and that the developmental milestones presented through the podcast are to be used as a guide for when parents/caregivers should expect to see a change in child's skills.
- Discussion about developmental milestones for children ages seven to nine months
 - Children in this age range are sitting without support, while sitting they will reach for toys and be able to control themselves enough, so they will not fall.
 - While laying on their backs or tummy, children will be able to get into a sitting position.
 - Starting to move with alternating leg movements (crawling and/or creeping)
 - Imitate others in simple play situations.

- They should enjoy a variety of movements (bouncing up and down, rocking back and forth)
- They are continuing to explore and examines objects with both hand and their mouths.
- Can turn pages of a simple chunky board book.
- They may have a favorite toy.
- Can tend to be clingy to familiar adults and be afraid of strangers.
- Strategies, discussion of simple activities to use in engage their child in age-appropriate activities to promote healthy development
 - Pay close attention to how your child reacts to new situations, continue providing a safe and secure environment for your child to promote happiness and comfort.
 - Read and talk to your child, they are listening and absorbing everything around them.
 - Play games with “my turn, your turn”.
 - Continue to copy your child’s sounds and words, they are communicating with you and learning those sounds.
- Contact information, survey, and invitation to next episode.

Podcast Five: Exploring Healthy Child Development, Ten to Twelve Months

For the remainder of the podcast episodes, the Developmental Stepping Stones explores healthy child development related to different age groups. For podcast five, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast quickly reviews the previous episodes topics and child developmental milestones. The focus of this episode is on healthy child development for children ages ten to twelve months.

Talking Points

- Introduce self and welcome parents/listeners to third episode, invite them to listen to previous episodes.
- The CDC recommends that parents/caregivers act early on developmental concerns to make a real difference for their child and them.
- If you're concerned about your child's development, don't wait, you know your child best.
- Remind listeners that all children develop at a different pace and that the developmental milestones presented through the podcast are to be used as a guide for when parents/caregivers should expect to see a change in child's skills.
- Discussion about developmental milestones for children ages ten to twelve months
 - Your little one is beginning to move about their environment in new ways, makes sure you are providing a safe environment for exploration.
 - Child are beginning to pull to stand and cruise furniture.
 - Has good balance when sitting and can throw objects without losing balance.
 - Can nicely claps hands together when playing, happy/excited and singing songs.
 - Can use their hands, specifically the thumb and pointer finger to pick up tiny objects like a cheerio to feed themselves.
 - They should enjoy listening to songs/music.
 - Continue exploring toys with hands, fingers, and mouth.
 - Can crawl or cruise to objects that are at a further distance, some children may be walking or taking first steps at this stage.

- Strategies to use with your child in the home environment to promote healthy child development.
 - Give you child lots of hugs, kisses, and praise for good behavior.
 - Continue to read to your child every day, encourage your child to turn the pages of the book and you can label the pictures.
 - Allow you child to start scribbling with crayons on a piece of paper, show them how to draw a line in different directions, praise them when they attempt the activity.
 - Explore block play, let your child stack them, sort them and encourage use of their hands, demonstrate the activity for them so they know what to do.
- Contact information, survey, and invitation to next episode.

Measuring Program Effectiveness

To measure the effectiveness of the Developmental Stepping Stones podcast and gather information regarding future topics and any recommendations for improvement in the future.

The program developer deployed a survey, containing 6 questions in total and made it available in the description box of each podcast episode and referenced it at the end of each podcast

episode. The survey was developed and then designed using SurveyMonkey, which is a suite of products that are designed to help users get answers to questions that will help their businesses and companies grow (surveymonkey.com, 2021). Program effectiveness evaluations, such as a survey allows the program developer to focus on the intended outcomes of the given program.

With the general format of the questions, information was gathered that adds value to the podcast and allows for growth.

Each question of the survey served its own purpose, the program developer considered what constructs needed to be measured with the survey and that the information gathered would benefit program outcomes and further development (McDavid et al., 2019). The general flow of the survey allowed for warm up questions to begin the survey; these types of questions allow respondents to speak about how they connected to the program. Once respondents expressed how they connected to the program, they then were asked factual program related questions to identify their typical experiences with similar programming. It was also important to solicit responses related to assessment of the program and round out the survey with an overall rating and suggestions and recommendations for future episodes (McDavid et al., 2019).

In addition to deploying the survey through the actual podcast platform, the program developer created, and distributed program flyers as seen in the Appendix A to draw in new listeners and create awareness of the podcast. This allowed for people entering and exiting the early learning center to quickly read and locate the podcast at their leisure, which in turn lead them to the survey connected to each episode. Using multiple streams of connecting with the community is beneficial to program outcomes, giving key stakeholders the ability to provide feedback through the survey and spread the word about a new way to gain knowledge via the program flyers.

Survey Questions for The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast

1. How did you first learn about The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast?
 - a. Word of mouth
 - b. Search engine
 - c. iTunes
 - d. Social Media

- e. Other (please specify)
2. How long do you typically listen to podcasts?
 - a. Less than 15 minutes
 - b. 15-30 minutes
 - c. 30-60 minutes
 - d. 1-3 hours
 3. Was this podcast helpful in building your knowledge and understanding of healthy child development?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 4. Was the information presented through the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast helpful in learning new ways to engage with your child?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 5. What information was most helpful from this podcast?
 6. Any recommendations or suggestions for improvement or future podcast topics?

Podcast Platform

Podcasting has quickly become an easily accessible form for educating a target audience in a format that has been shown to be beneficial to adult learning (Davidson et al., 2019). The

Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast was developed to educate parents/caregiver, teachers, and the community in child development and the importance it plays in a child's life and how that impacts future success. With the knowledge that podcasting has become a popular form for easily educating target audiences, the developer chose to use AnchorFM to host and develop the podcast. AnchorFM is a free, unlimited, easy hosting and podcast distribution website that allows podcasters to record within the program, edit, and upload to multiple platforms to extend the potential reach (anchorfm.com, 2021).

Program implementation for The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast will be dynamic and plans for updating will happen as new information is obtained and becomes available to the program developer (McDavid, et al, 2019). The ease of the chosen platform, AnchorFM allows for this dynamic layout and will allow for easy implementation for future professionals who follow the program development plan of The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast. Davidson et al. 2019 conducted a study of narrative podcast that demonstrated how brief, freely available, and easily accessible podcast can be powerful educational tools for use in modern adult learning.

Chapter IV: Results and Findings

At time of writing, the program developer successfully recorded, edited, and distributed 4 podcasts using the chosen podcasting platform AnchorFM. Based on data gathered through AnchorFM, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast had 57.23 (97%) of its listeners located within the United States and the remaining 1.18 (2%) located in the United Kingdom. 55% of listeners accessed the podcast through AnchorFM, 42% used the listening platform Spotify, and the remaining 3% of listeners accessed the podcast through other means. The devices used to listen to the podcast ranged from 53% web based, 2% iPhone users, and 45% used other means

(Android etc.). Demographic information for the Developmental Stepping Stones podcast was almost evenly split, with 59% of the listening audience being male and females holding 41% of the remaining listening audience (as shown in Figure 2). Ages of the podcast listeners varied from 78% of listeners in the age range 23-27, 17% in the 18-22 age range, and 6% in the age range of 35-44 years (as shown in Figure 1).

Figure 1

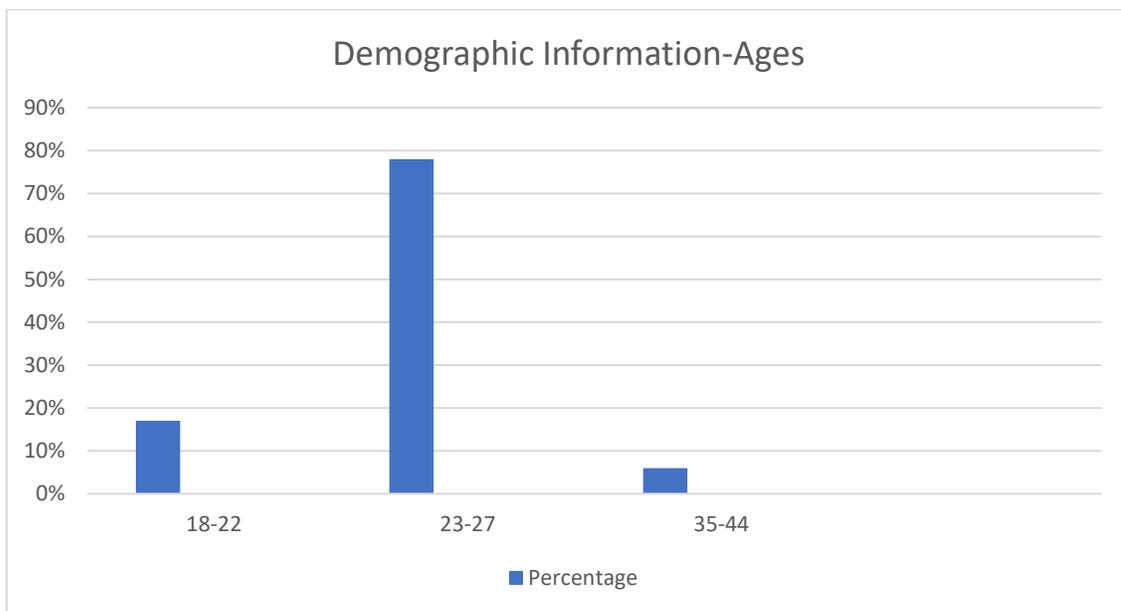
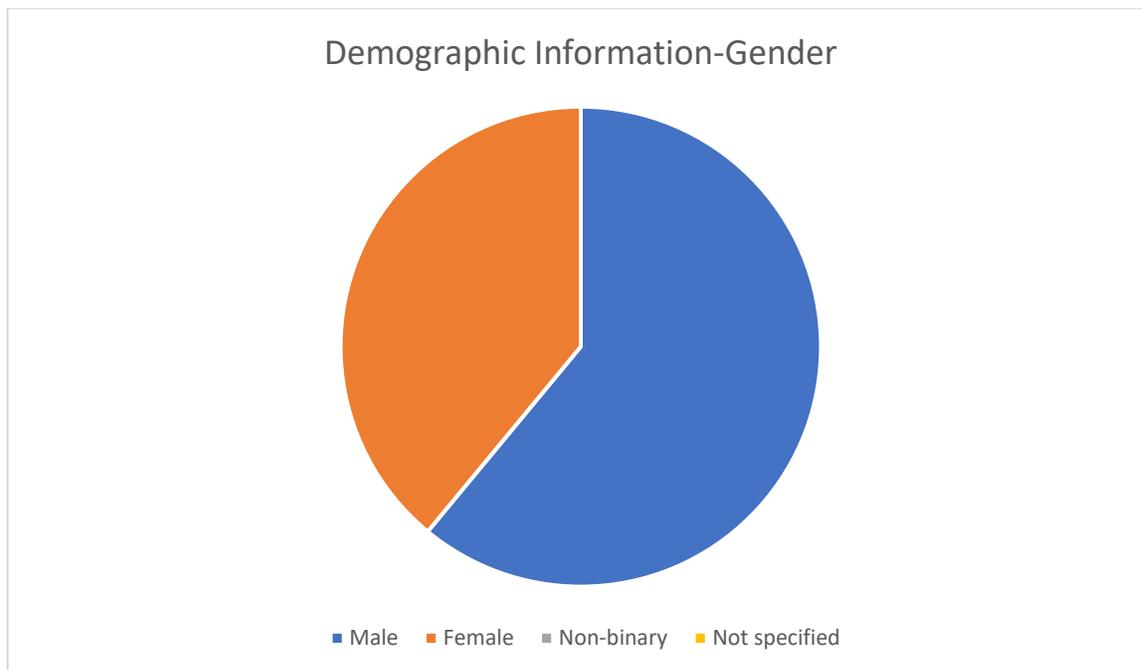


Figure 2



Findings of the podcast data collected, indicated that listeners enjoyed shorter podcasts, ranging from 7-9 minutes. Average listening rates were 7 minutes and 40 seconds, with the average episode being 8 minutes long. Survey results showed that the majority (91.67%) of survey respondents stated they typically listen to podcasts that are less than 15 minutes. With a total of 12 respondents, the survey found that 50% of listeners located the podcast via word of mouth and another 50% located the podcast via other means, such as Spotify, their child's early learning center/school and from another parent.

Benefits and Recommendations from Survey Respondents

Of the 12 respondents, 100% of survey respondents stated that the podcast was helpful in building their knowledge and understanding of healthy child development. Additionally, 100% of respondents also stated that the information presented through the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast was helpful in learning new ways to engage with their child/children.

Recommendations from survey respondents included praise for the podcast and encouragement to continue with additional topics covering the first year of life. The Developmental Stepping Stones received positive feedback regarding programming and the overall takeaway is that parents, caregivers, teachers and early learning centers enjoyed the podcasting format as evident by listener data and survey feedback (Appendix C).

Chapter V: Discussion

The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast was developed out of an expressed need by community stakeholders (parents, teachers, and early learning centers) to increase knowledge around the topic of healthy child development and available resources within and surrounding the community. The program developer set forth to develop a program that was easily accessible and presented in a way that reached the target age group through use of popular technology (podcasting). Research has shown that modern adult learners are looking for easily accessible and free forms of education and podcasting has stepped in to fill one of those available formats (Davidson et al., 2019). Additional research has shown that social media, particularly podcasts have become an influential modality within informal medical education, providing students, residents, post-training physicians, and advanced practitioners with a means to supplement their education or use the podcasts to their own benefit to gain new knowledge (Berk et al., 2019). Research surrounding educating parents in this way is scarce, the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast and program development provides information to support this area of growth within communities. Also, it will allow others to develop similar programs to reach families of young children to increase knowledge surrounding healthy child development. The information gathered through program development and implementation of the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast has provided essential information regarding educating parents in a modern way

that allows them to access information in a way that is easy for them. The information provided to parents through the Developmental Stepping Stones podcast centered around healthy child development, with supporting information coming from the CDC's "Learn the Signs, Act Early" programming. Results demonstrated that listeners and 100% of survey respondents of the podcast enjoyed listening to episodes and felt that they were helpful in building knowledge, understanding, and learning new ways to engage with their children. Episode plays have been consistent across the board from time of release, with plays coming in each day, although the highest plays tend to be on the date of episode release.

The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast was shown to be beneficial to the community and listeners based on 100% of post podcast survey responses. Furthermore, survey respondents took the opportunity to share detailed information and recommendations on the podcast and topics they want included. Respondents to the survey stated that the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast was helpful in providing additional resources and references related to healthy child development, showed them different ways to engage with their babies, provided information on different states of learning for children and the holistic view that was used to speak about the child as seen in Appendix B.

Over the course of 3 weeks, data were collected through survey and analytical data from the podcasting platform (AnchorFM), data showed that most listeners enjoyed listening and learning via the podcasting format. Additionally, data showed that each episode received multiple plays from listeners. Podcast data demonstrated that at time of writing, there were 56 total plays across 4 full podcast episodes, with 12 an estimated audience of 12 based on recent episodes. It can be deduced that each of the 12 unique listeners completed the survey, providing important information for future podcast episodes. After careful analysis of the data, the program

developer noticed that the gender demographic information showed a higher number of male listeners (59%), compared to female listeners (41%), although the reason has yet to be discerned it can be proposed that male listeners may find it easier or less threatening to gather information regarding child development via the podcasting format. This allows them to freely listen at any time, get questions answered in a quick and concise manner and have the information readily available whenever they need it. The program developer suggests that additional research be done in this area to further investigate the impact of providing information to parents/caregiver via a podcast. The number of male listeners can also be attributed to the fact that studies have shown that 56% of podcast listeners overall tend to be men, listening to at least one podcast per month (edisonresearch.com, 2019).

In addition to the number of male listeners, the data also demonstrated that most listeners were in the age range of 23-27 years of age. This data showed that younger parents/caregivers are drawn towards this method of learning for obtaining new information in a way that is easily accessible for them. Listeners stated that they enjoyed listening to a podcast that was less than 15 minutes because it allowed them to play it in between their child/children's nap times or while on the go from one location to the next. Ease of use and the quality of information was a major source of compliments from many survey respondents, listeners requested additional episodes, resources and references. Additionally, listeners found the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast to be helpful in providing developmental information across many age ranges, providing strategies on how to engage with their children, found the ideas presented to be easy to understand and implement and appreciated the holistic view the podcast took exploring social emotional development (Appendix B).

Furthermore, survey respondents provided feedback on recommendations for future episodes and information they would like included. Most respondents stated they wanted more episodes exploring children through the first year of life, suggestions included information on breastfeeding and teething. The program developer plans to implement these requests in future podcast episodes and has already planned to discuss and review child development for children through the ages in a sequential pattern for ease of use.

Programming and Occupational Therapy

The Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast aimed to address community concerns and identified issues surrounding the lack of knowledge of child developmental milestones and how they impact future success. To assist the community in identification of these issues and to create a critical consciousness surrounding the topic, the program developer utilized the teachings and beliefs of the occupational therapy profession to achieve these goals. Occupational therapy professionals have a critical role to play, developing programs and involving themselves in community practices to positively impact those within it. Social change professionals, such as occupational therapists, play a key role in building the community through programs built with and within the communities.

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) detailed one way that the profession contributes, and that is through health promotion (aota.org, 2015). Which the World Health Organization (2019) has defined as “the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health.” Health promotion is an essential part of being an occupational therapist, through the treatment and evaluation process we can identify barriers and enablers to successful participation in daily activities. This process allows for the patient to gain control of their lives and engage in those activities that are meaningful and purposeful to them. In addition,

engagement in health promotion allows occupational therapy practitioners to work on improving not only the occupational performance of an individual but their health and quality of life as well. Health and wellbeing have been directly linked to engagement in daily occupations, occupational therapists demonstrate a complex understanding of the interactions between a person, their environment, and the activities in which they participate (aota.org, 2015). For the individuals we treat, occupational participation within the community can prove to be beneficial, providing them with a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose.

Through health promotion, the occupational therapy program developer will help parents, teachers, community members, and early learning centers build their knowledge in developmental milestones establishing their sense of purpose and building their confidence in advocating for their child/student. Focusing on health and wellbeing, the program developer has set forth in establishing programming that is both meaningful and purposeful to the targeted population.

Implications for Practice, Education, Research and Future Directions

The key findings of the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast, show that parents, teachers, and early learning centers find value in the importance of healthy child development and are seeking the information in a way that is convenient for them. The findings also indicate that the presentation of key information surrounding healthy child development, such as developmental milestones, strategies/activities, and community resources are helpful in empowering parents, teachers, and community stakeholders to engage with their children/students/community in meaningful and purposeful ways that will positively impact development and future success. Additionally, the information was found to be helpful in increasing knowledge and understanding around child development which has been shown to

foster positive developmental trajectories in children (Zand et al., 2015). Occupational therapists, specifically those working with the pediatric population, play a vital role in assisting families with building and fostering those healthy relationships within their families. Encouraging participation in daily childhood activities together (such as play and self-care routines) to promote health development, educating and supporting families through the child development process. With a program such as the Developmental Stepping Stones Podcast, which is produced, developed, and disseminated by an occupational therapist, who is skilled and an expert in activities (occupations), parents/caregivers are given the opportunity to gain valuable information that will assist them in fostering those healthy relationships in an easily accessible way (aota.org, 2021).

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Appendix A

Developmental Stepping Stones Flyer (Placed in Early Learning Center)



A NEW AND SIMPLE WAY TO LEARN ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**JOIN THE DISCUSSION ANYTIME FROM ANYWHERE PODCASTS ARE AVAILABLE
(SPOTIFY, APPLE PODCASTS, GOOGLE, ANCHOR FM ETC)**

Appendix B

Detailed Survey Responses to Question #5 (What Information Was Most Helpful From This Podcast?)

1. The additional resources
2. The additional resources and references
3. Loved the easy ideas to engage with my child.
4. the information on four to six months was helpful.
5. the developmental information
6. The part that was most helpful was when they talked about what a baby can do at their age.
7. different ways to play with my child.
8. Different stages of babies learning.
9. The holistic view on the child inclusive of social emotional development
10. the part about develop milestones was interesting, I learned a good amount of information.
11. The resources shared.
12. I enjoyed when the host discussed things, I could do with my baby during the day.

Appendix C

Detailed Survey Responses to Question #6 (Any recommendations or suggestions for improvement of future podcast topics?)

1. Breastfeeding, how teething impact development (if it does) and helpful tools, recommendations on educational toys,TV shows and at home activities.
2. Do more podcasts through the first year of life.
3. Enjoyed the newest episode, look forward to more.
4. No additional recommendations
5. None yet
6. More strategies but overall, it is very good.
7. Suggestion to talk about other ages (my baby is 2 years old) during the talk.
8. Everything was good.
9. No extra recommendation, I enjoyed it.