

8-4-2024

## Developing a Summer Enrichment Program for School-Aged Children: The Role of Occupational Therapy in Summer Experiences

Morgann Lonczak  
Nova Southeastern University, ml2647@mynsu.nova.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd\\_ot\\_capstone](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd_ot_capstone)

 Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

## Share Feedback About This Item

---

### NSUWorks Citation

Morgann Lonczak. 2024. *Developing a Summer Enrichment Program for School-Aged Children: The Role of Occupational Therapy in Summer Experiences*. Capstone. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, . (150)  
[https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd\\_ot\\_capstone/150](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd_ot_capstone/150).

This Entry Level Capstone is brought to you by the Department of Occupational Therapy at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Department of Occupational Therapy Entry-Level Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact [nsuworks@nova.edu](mailto:nsuworks@nova.edu).



# Developing a Summer Enrichment Program for School-Aged Children: The Role of Occupational Therapy in Summer Experiences

Morgann Lonczak, OTD-S

Lindsay Cancel, MOT, OTR/L-Great Strides Rehabilitation



## Introduction

- Summer experiences are an important setting for learning and developing social and emotional learning skills in children and youth.
- The number of children enrolled in summer camps in 2020 was estimated to be approximately 26 million (American Camp Association, 2023)
- OTs have distinct knowledge, skills, and qualities that contribute to the success of using occupation as a therapeutic technique to encourage participation and engagement.
- This capstone project aimed to develop a summer program that encouraged strengthening in fine motor or gross motor skills, social interaction, peer play, and emotional regulation.

## Capstone Site Description

- Great Strides Rehabilitation (GSR) in Jacksonville FL is a pediatric based company that specializes in providing therapy to children with developmental and physical disabilities.
  - Ages 0-21
  - Diagnoses: ASD, ADHD, ODD, CP, down syndrome, and more
  - Specialties: occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, music therapy, applied behavior analysis
- River City Science Academy is a charter school that serves K-12 and has a contract with GSR to provide OT to children who have IEPs and provided us space to implement the summer camp.



## Summary of Needs Assessment

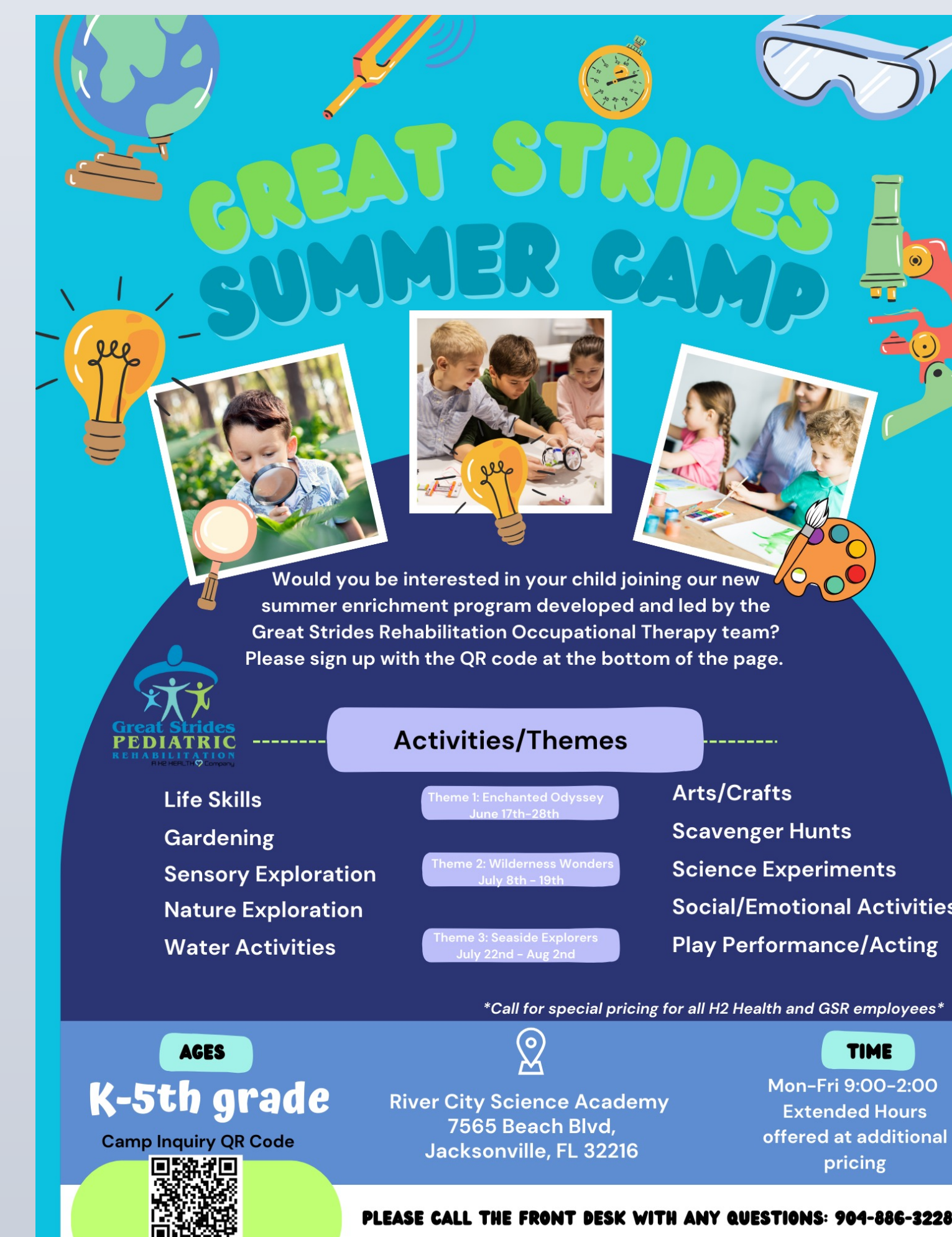
- OT run camps focus largely on physical disabilities and camp adaptations for these individuals.
- Summer camp enrollment is growing rapidly.
- Disparities exist in the community for those who can afford summer enrichment camps.
- School based OTs lose a regular schedule during the summer
- Guide for future summer camp implementation for GSR.

## Literature Review Summary

- The inherent nature of camp can provide a rich setting for developing positive youth outcomes that support success in school and in life (Richmond et al., 2019).
- With decreased structured summer schedules there are concerns about children's sedentary behavior and its effect on overall health (Dyer et al., 2023).
- The CDC recommends that children aged 6-17 years should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Children who do not engage in sufficient physical activity are at a higher risk for chronic conditions, like overweight/obesity, hypertension, type II diabetes, heart disease, and other diseases (Dyer et al., 2023).
- Non-STEM specialty camps or programs such as arts, sports, or drama camps or programs, are the most commonly reported summer experience (Afterschool Alliance, 2021).
- Parents reported that their children demonstrated gains in several areas including self-esteem, independence, leadership, social comfort, and peer relationships as identified in pre- to post-camp measures and were maintained at a 6-month follow up (Richmond et al., 2019).
- Adults who attended camp as children identified camp-related outcomes within three categories: self-determined behavior (ie. confidence, self-efficacy, friendships, initiative, and competence), critical thinking, and physical well-being (Richmond et al., 2019).

## Capstone Project Description

- The capstone project included three phases:
  - Development
    - Marketing : promotional flyer creation
    - Activity planning: designing a six-week summer camp program with three themes (Magic/Fantasy, Nature/STEM, and Beach/Water), planning outdoor, indoor, and craft themed activities with detailed materials and instructions list, mindfulness activities, and free play activities.
    - Ideas for large group activities and adaptations if needed
    - Development of a daily schedule
  - Implementation
    - Gathering materials and setting up activities needed for the day (obstacle courses/scavenger hunts)
    - Leading all activities for participants
    - Supervision of participants
    - Quickly changing activities if needed
  - Future changes/adaptations
    - Discussed with mentor
    - Made changes to session duration from two weeks to one week.
    - Replaced activities that took less time to complete.
    - Discussed marketing changes to reach our targeted population.



## Capstone Project Outcomes

- Designed a six-week summer camp program focused on utilizing enriching activities to promote engagement and skills development.
  - Successfully created a detailed daily guide to implementation with 2-3 themed activities a day.
- Implemented a successful two-week summer camp program.
  - Gathered all materials required and stayed in budget by utilizing reusable or cost effective materials.
  - Led all daily activities and provided supervision for camp participants
  - Provided one-on-one assistance if needed
- Future camp implementation
  - Provided a google folder of all camp related research and directions/guides to mentor and GSR staff
  - Laid out all changes to ensure successful programming in the future.
- Developed clinical skills in school-based setting



## Capstone Goals Achieved

1. I aided in developing all aspects of a summer enrichment program for Great Strides Rehabilitation including marketing, activity planning, and adaptations for future implementation.
2. I successfully implemented the summer program over a 2-week period by aiding in leading activities and helping to manage the schedule, materials, participants, and volunteers.
3. I gained clinical knowledge and skills by attending OT sessions in the school setting and treating patients 4-5 days a week.
4. I gained further clinical knowledge by completing CEU's relevant to the clinical setting and summer program including "Yoga and Mindfulness for the Classroom" and simulations on Simucase.

### June 24th: Star Wars

9:00	Arrival/screen-free play
9:15	Outdoor themed activity: <a href="#">Jedi training</a>
10:00	Mindfulness/grounding: <a href="#">star wars themed yoga</a>
10:15	Indoor themed craft/creation: <a href="#">make your own light saber</a>
11:15	Clean Up (opportunity for chores/daily job)
11:30	Lunch
12:00	Indoor themed activity/game: <a href="#">use static from balloons to move objects or other balloons (the force)</a> , knock down the stormtroopers
1:30	Indoor/outdoor free play/games
2:00	Dismissal/Pick-Up

## Implications for OT Practice

- Aid in providing school-based OTs a practice area to treat during summer hours.
  - Still allows these OTs to engage with the school-aged population.
- Encourage participation in gross motor and movement activities during the summer months for children who do not have any summer opportunities.
- Foster development of social emotional learning skills, ADL skills, fine motor, and visual motor skills for children who are not eligible or can't afford OT services.
- Provides a way for OTs to connect with the community and establish importance outside of the school/outpatient setting.

## REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Christina Kane, Ed.D, MS, OTR/L and Dr. Alicia Kopp, OTD, OTR/L for their support and guidance through the entire capstone experience.

I would also like to thank my mentor Lindsay Cancel, MOT, OTR/L for her unwavering support of me and my journey to becoming a great OT. She truly mentored me through not only my capstone project but my development as a professional OT.