

What Parents Want: Informed Pediatric Occupational Therapy

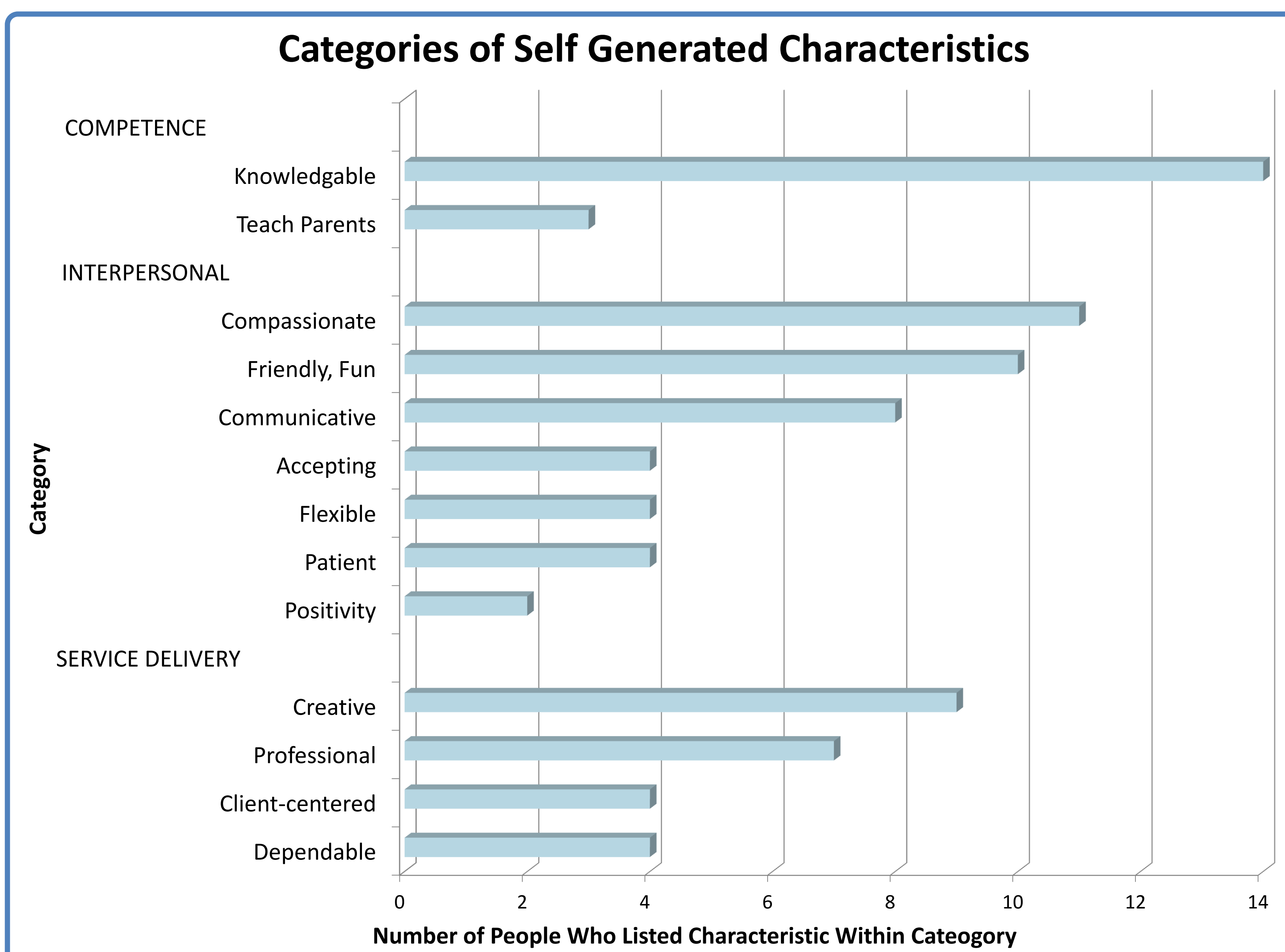
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Introduction

- Over 25% of occupational therapists (OTs) work with children (AOTA Occupational Therapy Compensation and Workforce Study, 2010)
- Parents are a critical aspect of a child's environment and context therefore, parent opinion is of significant importance
- There is a lack of research specifically in occupational therapy (OT) on what characteristics parents report they want in their child's therapist
- **Research question: What qualities do parents desire for their child's occupational therapist?**

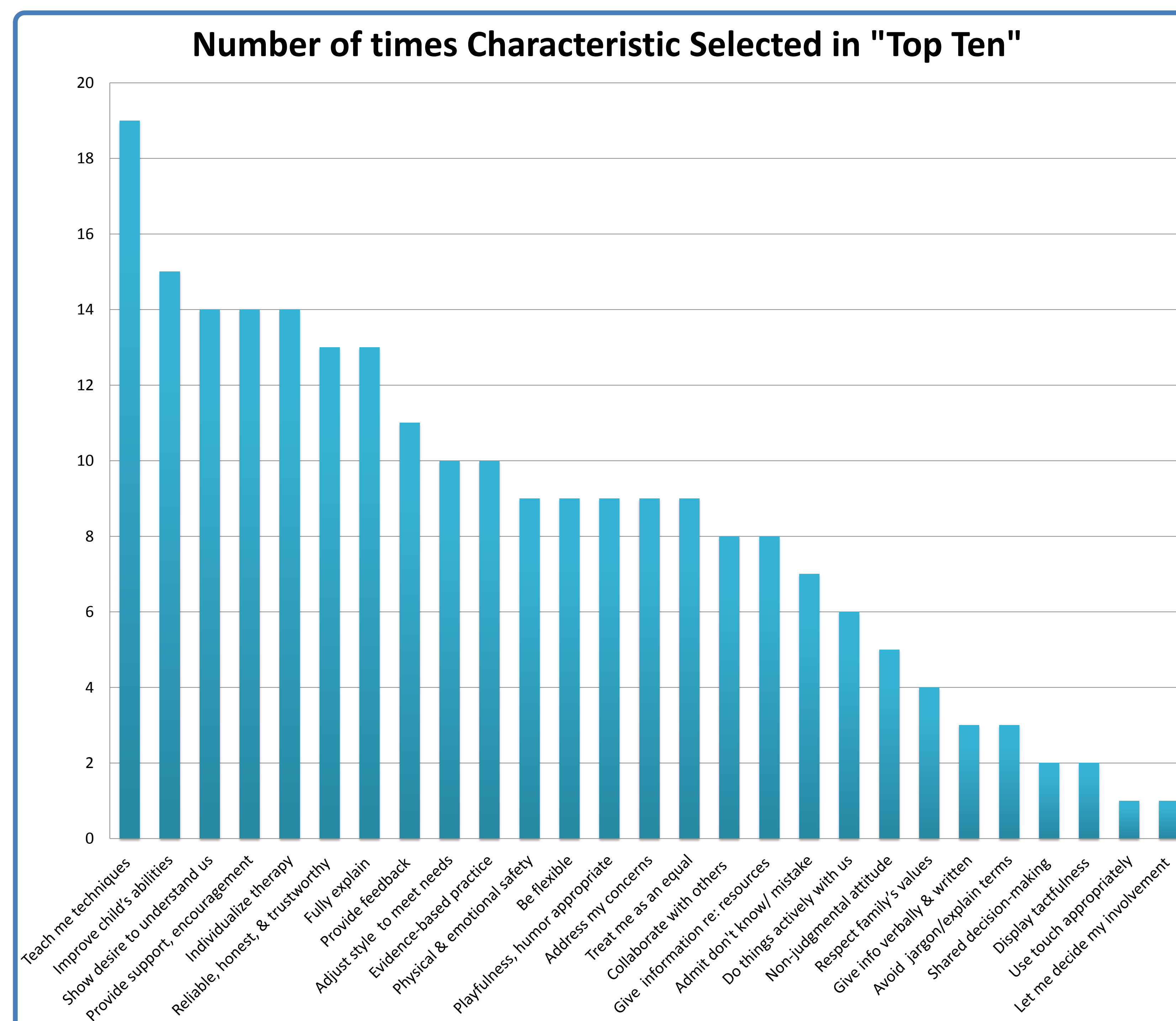
Methods

22 North Carolinian parents of children receiving OT took a survey regarding what they valued in their child's therapist. Parents were asked to list their own self-generated characteristics as well as choose and rank their top ten preferences from a provided list of characteristics. The self-generated lists were grouped into 3 themes & 12 subthemes then arranged by frequency. The chosen and ranked provided characteristics were analyzed for frequency and average ranking. Sample was predominantly educated, Caucasian females.



Results

- Themes of competence, interpersonal skills, and service delivery process emerged from the self generated characteristics
- Both the most picked "top ten" and the "top ranked" characteristics were roughly the same (Teach me things, improve my child's abilities, provide individualized care, understand us, give encouragement, and be reliable & honest)
- The "top ten" and "top ranked" provided characteristics also mirrored the self generated categories
- Self generated characteristics support current suggestions in OT literature (knowledgeable, professional, flexible, friendly, and preference for individualized care)
- Deciding level of involvement & providing information written/verbally were both mentioned in parent perspectives literature review but did not appear to be high priorities for this sample



Self Generated Characteristics Represented in Frequency Word Cloud



Discussion/Conclusion

- Particular sample group prioritizes: knowledge, compassion, communication, teaching parents techniques, and providing individualized therapy
- Some findings are consistent with previous parent preference research (compassionate, dependable, communicative) (MacKean, Thurston, & Scott, 2005)
- However, some findings supported pediatric OT practice standards (improving function, providing individualized care, teaching techniques, knowledgeable) – OT service delivery is different from other pediatric professions and parents value these differences
- Practice implications: Emphasizes importance of therapist getting to know each family and their particular values and expectations

Future Research Directions

- Limitations: small sample size, homogeneity of the sample size
- Further research aims: larger sample size targeting entire United States, asking demographic questions regarding children, focus groups to clarify results

References

AOTA Occupational Therapy Compensation and Workforce Study. (2010). In The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. Retrieved from <https://www.aota.org//media/Corporate/Files/EducationCareers/Prospective/Workforce-trends-in-OT.PDF>
 MacKean, G. L., Thurston, W. E., & Scott, C. M. (2005). Bridging the divide between families and health professionals' perspectives on family-centered care. *Health Expectations*, 8, 74 – 85.