

‘Improving Communication and Collaboration with Parents as an Occupational Therapist’



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

**Improving Communication and Collaboration
with Parents as an Occupational Therapist**

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- **Understanding the importance of parent-therapist partnership**
- **Building trust and strong relationships**
- **Supporting the child's development together**
- **Practical strategies for everyday practice**



PRESENTATION FOCUS

This presentation focuses on how occupational therapists can effectively communicate and collaborate with parents. In pediatric therapy, progress does not happen in isolation—it happens through partnership.

Parents are not just observers; they are active participants in the child's development. Today, we will explore practical ways to strengthen this relationship in a way that is respectful, culturally sensitive, and easy to apply in real-life settings.



Stronger Together, Better Outcomes

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION
BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS AND PARENTS

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-  This presentation focuses on how occupational therapists can effectively communicate and collaborate with parents.
-  In pediatric therapy, **progress does not happen in isolation—it happens through partnership.** Parents are not just observers; they are active participants in the child's development.
-  Today, we will explore **practical ways** to strengthen this relationship in a way that is **respectful, culturally sensitive, and easy to apply** in real-life settings.

 **PARTNERSHIP**
We work together for the child.

 **RESPECT**
We value every family's voice.

 **CULTURAL SENSITIVITY**
We honour beliefs and traditions.

 **PRACTICAL STRATEGIES**
Easy to use.
Easy to apply.

 **BETTER OUTCOMES**
Stronger communication.
Stronger progress.

WHAT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY REALLY MEANS

- **Focuses on daily life skills**
- **Supports independence and participation**
- **Addresses motor, sensory, and social skills**
- **Works across home, school, and community**

Occupational therapy helps children participate fully in everyday life—from dressing and feeding to playing and learning. It takes a holistic approach, meaning we look at the whole child, not just one skill area .



*Empowering children.
Enabling participation.* 

Focuses on daily life skills

- Dressing
- Feeding
- Grooming
- Toileting
- Play and leisure
- Learning activities

Supports independence and participation

Building confidence to do things for themselves and join in with others.

Addresses motor, sensory, and social skills

- Fine and gross motor
- Sensory processing
- Social interaction
- Communication
- Emotional regulation

Works across home, school, and community

Collaborating with families, teachers, and communities to support children in every environment.

Occupational therapy helps children participate fully in everyday life—from dressing and feeding to playing and learning. It takes a holistic approach, meaning we look at the whole child, not just one skill area.

*Every child. Every activity. Every day.
That's the power of occupational therapy.*

WHY COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION MATTERS

- ✓ **Strong communication improves therapy outcomes**
- ✓ **Parents reinforce therapy at home**
- ✓ **Builds trust and consistency**
- ✓ **Reduces misunderstandings**

Communication is the foundation of successful therapy. When parents understand what is happening in therapy, they can continue strategies at home, which improves outcomes. Research shows that parent involvement increases adherence and consistency in therapy. Without clear communication, parents may feel confused, excluded, or even mistrustful, which can negatively affect the child's progress.

- **Therapy does not end in the clinic**
- **Parents continue support at home**
- **Consistency improves outcomes**
- **Builds confidence and independence**

When therapists and parents collaborate, children don't just cope—they thrive. Consistent support across environments strengthens learning and builds independence.


Communication is the *foundation* of successful therapy.

When parents understand what is happening in therapy, they can continue strategies at home, which **improves outcomes**.






Research shows that **parent involvement increases adherence and consistency in therapy.**



-  Parents feel informed and confident.
-  Strategies are consistent at home and in therapy.
-  Children make better progress.
-  Stronger collaboration builds trust.



-  Parents may feel confused, excluded, or even mistrustful.
-  Inconsistent strategies at home.
-  Can negatively affect the child's progress.



Let's communicate, collaborate, and work together for your child's success.



PARENTS AS KEY PARTNERS

- ✓ **Parents know their child best**
- ✓ **They observe behaviors outside therapy**
- ✓ **They provide daily support**
- ✓ **They help shape meaningful goals**
- **Improves therapy effectiveness**
- **Increases consistency**
- **Builds emotional security for the child**
- **Supports long-term progress**

Parents are experts in their child's daily life. They see behaviors, strengths, and challenges that therapists may not observe in sessions. Recognizing parents as equal partners builds respect and improves collaboration. Studies highlight that parents bring valuable insight that complements professional knowledge.

Parent involvement is not optional—it is essential. Children progress faster when strategies are reinforced at home. Parents bring lived experience. They see what happens outside therapy and provide critical information that helps tailor interventions effectively.

Parents often feel overwhelmed and misunderstood. Recognizing their journey helps therapists communicate with empathy and build stronger relationships.



COMMON BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

- **Use of complex medical language**
- **Cultural and language differences**
- **Lack of time or follow-up**
- **Different expectations between therapist and parent**

Communication challenges often arise from simple issues like using too much technical language or not considering cultural beliefs. Parents may struggle to understand information if it is not explained clearly. Differences in expectations can also create tension. These barriers must be actively addressed to improve collaboration. Communication can break down when information is unclear or not culturally appropriate. Therapists must adapt communication to meet parents where they are.

BUILDING TRUST WITH PARENTS

- Be honest and transparent
- Follow through on promises
- Respect confidentiality
- Show genuine care and interest

Trust is not built in one session—it develops over time through consistent, respectful interactions. Parents are more likely to engage when they feel respected and heard. Simple actions like greeting parents warmly, remembering details about their child, and being reliable go a long way in building trust.

BUILDING TRUST, ONE STEP AT A TIME

We listen.
We respect.
We work together.

Trust is not built in one session—it develops over time through consistent, respectful interactions.

Parents are more likely to engage when they feel respected and heard.

Simple actions like greeting parents warmly, remembering details about their child, and being reliable go a long way in building trust.

Small actions. Big impact. Stronger relationships.

- Greet Warmly
- Remember Details
- Be Reliable
- Listen Actively
- Show Respect

AKWAABA

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

TOGETHER WE HELP CHILDREN THRIVE

USING SIMPLE AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION

- Avoid jargon or explain it simply
- Use everyday language
- Give examples parents can relate to
- Check for understanding

Many parents struggle with technical language. For example, instead of saying “fine motor deficits,” you can say “difficulty using hands for small tasks like writing.” Clear communication ensures parents fully understand and can apply strategies at home. Avoid overwhelming parents with technical terms. Clear communication empowers parents to apply strategies at home.

CLEAR COMMUNICATION, STRONG PARTNERSHIP

- Avoid jargon or explain it simply
- Use **everyday** language
- Give **examples** parents can relate to
- Check for understanding

EXAMPLE

Many parents struggle with technical language. For example, instead of saying “**fine motor deficits**,” you can say “difficulty using hands for small tasks like writing.”

Clear communication ensures parents fully understand and can **apply strategies** at home.

Avoid overwhelming parents with technical terms. Clear communication empowers parents to apply strategies at home.

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

- Listen without interrupting**
- Ask open-ended questions**
- Show empathy**
- Reflect what parents say and summarize**

Listening is just as important as speaking. When parents feel heard, they are more likely to trust and engage.

Asking questions like “What have you noticed at home?” invites collaboration and shows respect for their input.

FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH

- **Treat parents as equal partners**
- **Respect family values and culture**
- **Adapt goals to family needs**
- **Focus on strengths, not just challenges**

A family-centered approach means working with the family, not just the child. Therapy should fit into the family's daily life and cultural context. When parents feel included and respected, they are more committed to the process.

TOGETHER WE GROW!

When families and therapists work together, children thrive! ❤️

AKWAABA WELCOMES YOU

A FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH TO STRONGER OUTCOMES

- TREAT PARENTS AS EQUAL PARTNERS**
You know your child best. Your insights and experiences matter.
- RESPECT FAMILY VALUES AND CULTURE**
We honour your beliefs, traditions, and ways of doing things.
- ADAPT GOALS TO FAMILY NEEDS**
Therapy goals should fit into your daily life and what matters most to your family.
- FOCUS ON STRENGTHS, NOT JUST CHALLENGES**
We build on your child's abilities and celebrate every success.

A FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH MEANS WORKING WITH THE FAMILY, NOT JUST THE CHILD.
THERAPY SHOULD FIT INTO THE FAMILY'S DAILY LIFE AND CULTURAL CONTEXT.

When parents feel included and respected, they are more committed to the process. ❤️

PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- **Provide regular updates**
- **Use multiple communication methods (calls, messages)**
- **Share both progress and challenges**
- **Schedule consistent check-ins**

Communication should not only happen during therapy sessions. Regular updates help parents stay informed and engaged. Even short messages or quick check-ins can strengthen the relationship and prevent misunderstandings.

ENCOURAGING PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Teach parents therapy strategies
- Encourage practice at home
- Involve them in goal setting
- Celebrate small successes

Parents play a key role in reinforcing therapy outside sessions. Teaching them simple, practical strategies ensures continuity. When parents are involved in goal setting, they feel ownership and motivation to support their child's progress.

PARENTS STRATEGIES

“Research shows that when parents are actively involved in therapy, children make faster and more consistent progress. This is because learning doesn’t stop after a therapy session—it continues at home.

“Imagine a child who practices a skill only once a week during therapy, compared to a child who practices that same skill every day at home. The difference in progress is clear. That’s the power of parent involvement—and these strategies will show you how to make that impact.”



PARENTS STRATEGIES



STRATEGY 1

Share What You See at Home



Parents' observations provide **valuable insight** into the child's daily experiences. Sharing what works, what doesn't, and real-life examples helps therapists design meaningful interventions. This ensures therapy is **practical and relevant** to the child's everyday life.

What You Can Share:



What your child enjoys or motivates them



Challenges you see at home



Daily routines (morning, meals, play, bedtime, etc.)



What strategies have worked (or not)



Any changes in mood, behavior, or participation

He struggles with buttoning his shirt but can do it with help at home.

She gets easily distracted during homework time. Music helps her focus better.



Your voice helps shape therapy that truly supports your child – at home, in therapy, and in life.

STRATEGY 2

Keep Communication Open



Regular communication keeps therapy aligned and responsive to the child's needs.



Small updates about behavior or progress help therapists adjust strategies effectively.



Consistent interaction strengthens collaboration between parents and therapists.

Ways to Keep Communication Open:



Share short daily updates about home routines, behaviors, or challenges.



Attend meetings and sessions regularly.



Ask questions and seek clarification when needed.



Share what works (and what doesn't) at home.



Be honest, open, and respectful in every conversation.



Together, our communication helps your child grow, learn, and reach their full potential.

STRATEGY 3 Ask Questions



Understand Goals

Asking questions helps parents understand therapy goals and strategies clearly.



Build Confidence

It builds confidence and ensures they can support their child effectively at home.



Know the 'Why'

Understanding the "why" behind therapy improves engagement and outcomes.

Ways to Ask Questions During Therapy:



Ask about your child's goals and how they are measured.



Ask how you can support strategies at home.



Ask for examples of activities and routines to try.



Ask for clarification when something is unclear.



Ask how often progress will be reviewed.



Your questions show your commitment and help your child succeed.

STRATEGY 4

Reinforce Skills at Home



Build Skills Daily

Children develop skills best through consistent practice in daily routines.



Strengthen Learning

Using therapy strategies at home strengthens learning and promotes independence.



Keep It Simple & Fun

Keeping activities simple and enjoyable encourages continued participation.

Ways to Reinforce Skills at Home:



Practice during daily routines (meals, bath time, getting dressed).



Use the same words, cues, and strategies therapists use.



Praise effort and progress to build confidence.



Make activities playful and engaging.



Track small wins and celebrate progress together.



Your support at home helps your child practice, grow, and become more independent every day.

STRATEGY 5

BE PART OF GOAL SETTING

Your insights
help shape
their success.



PARENTS PLAY A KEY ROLE
IN SETTING **MEANINGFUL** AND
PRACTICAL THERAPY GOALS.



ALIGNING GOALS WITH
FAMILY PRIORITIES ENSURES
THERAPY IS RELEVANT AND
FUNCTIONAL.



THIS MAKES PROGRESS MORE
IMPACTFUL IN THE CHILD'S
REAL-LIFE ENVIRONMENT.



OUR GOALS

- Improve communication at home
- Increase independence with daily routines
- Build confidence in social situations

STRATEGY 6: CELEBRATE SMALL WINS

➤ Every step forward matters! ➤



RECOGNIZES ACHIEVEMENT

Recognizing small achievements builds the child's **confidence**.



BUILDS MOTIVATION

Encouragement reinforces effort and keeps the child **motivated**.



SUPPORTS PROGRESS

Small wins lead to consistent progress over time.



CREATES POSITIVE HABITS

Celebrating wins helps develop a **positive mindset** and a love for learning.



Every small win is a big step!

 Celebrate today.
Inspire for tomorrow. ✨

STRATEGY 7

Trust the Process



THERAPY PROGRESS takes time and may not always be linear.



TRUSTING THE THERAPIST-PARENT PARTNERSHIP supports consistency and long-term success.



PATIENCE AND COMMITMENT are essential throughout the journey.

Together, we build skills for a brighter tomorrow.



Trust the process. Great things take time.



CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN GHANAIAN CONTEXT

- Respect family beliefs and traditions
- Be mindful of stigma around disabilities
- Use culturally familiar examples
- Involve extended family when appropriate

In Ghana, cultural beliefs and family structures play a major role in caregiving. Some families may involve grandparents or community members. Being culturally sensitive helps build trust and ensures therapy recommendations are realistic and accepted.

COMMON MISTAKES THERAPISTS MAKE

- Using too much technical language
- Not listening to parents
- Being too rushed
- Focusing only on problems
- Ignoring cultural differences

Even experienced therapists can make these mistakes. For example, focusing only on what the child cannot do can discourage parents. Instead, balance concerns with strengths. Avoid rushing conversations—parents need time to process information.

CONCLUSION

- **Communication is the foundation of therapy success**
- **Parents are essential partners, not observers**
- **Trust and respect must be built over time**
- **Simple, clear, and consistent communication works best**
- **Collaboration improves outcomes for the child**

To conclude, effective communication is not just a skill—it is a responsibility. When therapists and parents work together as a team, children benefit the most. Small changes in how we communicate can lead to powerful improvements in therapy outcomes. Parents are not just supporters—they are essential partners. When therapists empower parents, progress continues far beyond the therapy session.

THANK YOU

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Empowering Children. Building Skills. Enhancing Everyday Life.



WHAT WE DO

- ✓ Help children develop skills for daily activities
- ✓ Support independence at home, school & play
- ✓ Improve physical, motor, and sensory skills
- ✓ Build confidence and participation in all areas of life



WE SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH:

-  Developmental Delays
-  Sensory Processing Differences
-  Learning Difficulties
-  Physical Disabilities
-  Mental Health Challenges



SCHOOL SKILLS

Handwriting, focus, and classroom participation



DAILY LIVING SKILLS

Eating, dressing, grooming, and independence



MOTOR SKILLS

Strength, coordination, balance, and movement



SENSORY INTEGRATION

Helping children respond, regulate, and engage in their environment



CONFIDENCE & PARTICIPATION

Building self-esteem and inclusion in everyday activities



WE DON'T JUST TREAT CHALLENGES; WE UNLOCK POTENTIAL. TOGETHER, WE HELP CHILDREN THRIVE!

