

Abstract

Ayres Sensory Integration® (ASI) is an evidenced based occupational therapy intervention used in different settings with children whose participation challenges are related to sensory integration. Parent education is an important part of ASI.⁶ ASI Parent Education Modules were developed to:

1. Educate caregivers about the sensory integrative factors that may be impacting their child's ability to participate fully in activities, tasks, and occupations^{7,8,9}
2. Provide suggestions for integrating therapeutic activities into daily routines^{7,8,9}
3. Promote collaboration between therapists and parents^{7,8,9}

The purpose of the project is to investigate parents' perceived facilitators and barriers to implementation of ASI Parent Education Modules for autistic children. This project utilizes a qualitative, phenomenological approach to examine the experiences of caregivers who used the modules during their child's occupational therapy intervention.⁹ Following the initial stages of reflexive thematic analysis, preliminary overarching codes include parent perspectives on ASI information, understanding the why, and home vs. clinic.¹

Introduction

Parent training can result in positive changes for parents and their autistic children.^{4,5} In ASI parent education in an important part of the intervention. Schaaf & Mailloux developed the ASI Parent Education Modules to guide clinicians using OT-ASI to educate and engage parents during the intervention process. and parents in learning about sensory processing difficulties.⁸ Data about the parent experience during these education modules is needed.

Methods

This study utilizes a qualitative, phenomenological approach to gain parents' experiences and perspectives on the supports and barriers impacting their ability to implement strategies from the ASI parent education modules.

Recruitment:

- Purposive sample of parents whose autistic children (ages 3-5 years) participated in occupational therapy intervention at Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH) using Ayres Sensory Integration
- Introduced to the ASI Parent Education Modules during their child's occupational therapy sessions.

Methods:

- One-on-one semi-structured interviews
- Focused on parents' experiences learning and using the ASI parent education modules [Table 1]

Data analysis:

- Utilized Braun and Clarke's steps for thematic analysis [Table 2].¹
- To ensure trustworthiness two coders were used to code the data

Table 1. Interview Questions

1	How did you hear about and get your child evaluated for occupational therapy services?
2	The ASI Parent Education Modules were used by therapists as part of the treatment sessions to provide information about the intervention and treatment, as well as to suggest activities that can be used with your child at home. For example, the therapist may have discussed your child's need for touch or movement sensation and provided activities at home to address this. Do you recall your experience talking with the therapist about these areas?
3	Can you tell me about your experience with the parent education aspect of the study?
4	Did the information change your experience interacting with your child at home? In the community?
5	Describe your experiences using the activities at home with your child...how did it go?
6	Can you describe an experience(s) where the parent education information was helpful? For you? For your child? For your family?
7	Can you describe an experience(s) where the parent education information was challenging? For you? For your child? For your family?
8	Please provide any other comments or input you have about the parent education aspect of the intervention and treatment your child received.

Table 2. Braun & Clarke's Phases for Thematic Analysis¹

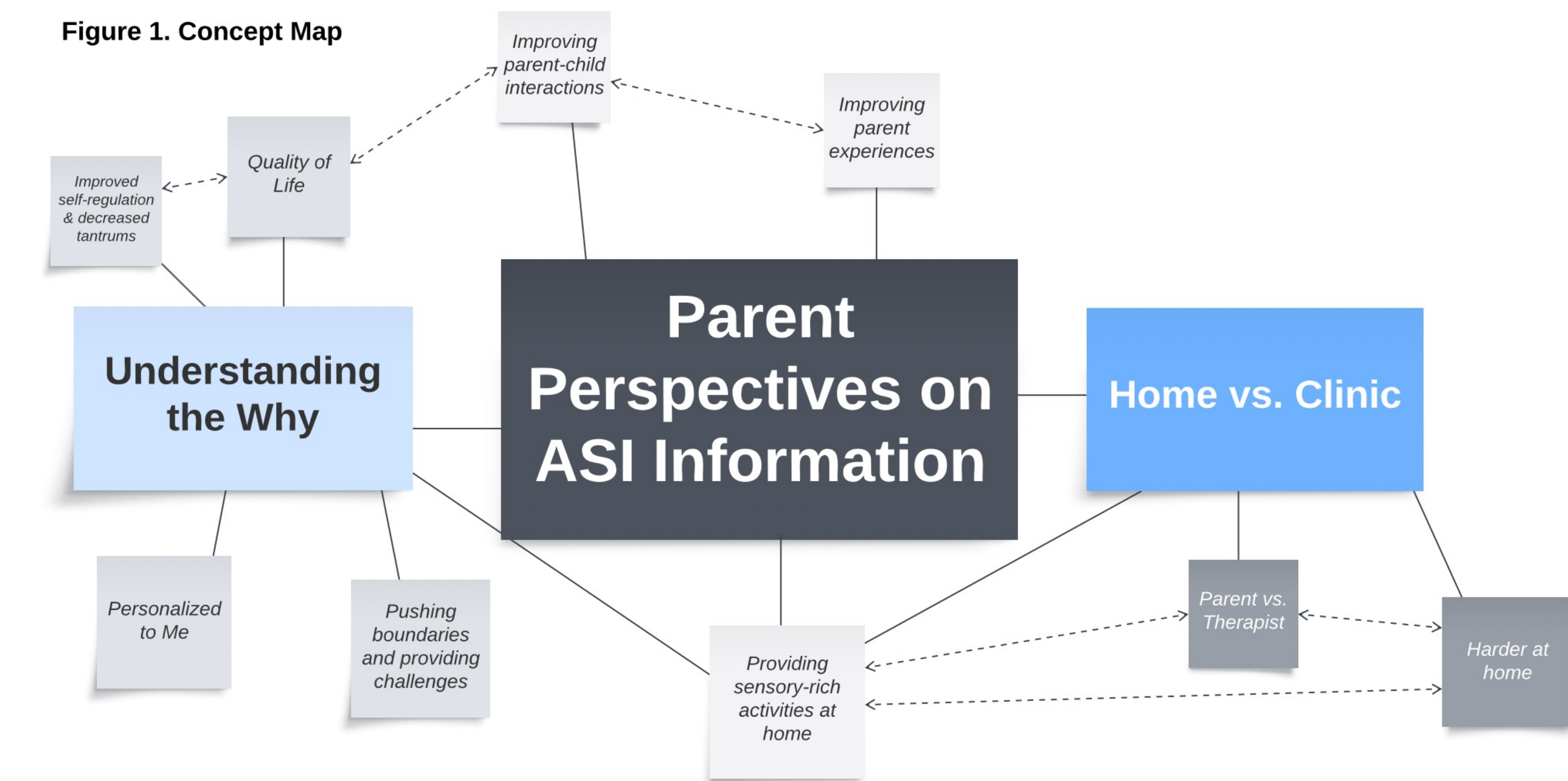
1. Familiarize oneself with, organize, and prepare the dataset
• Immerse oneself in the data
• Reading & re-reading, taking notes
2. Coding
• Systematic process to identify data that is potentially meaningful to your research question(s)
• Code labels are used to capture the meaning of the data
3. Generating initial themes
• Identifying patterns and data with shared meaning
• Themes should "capture the data" and help answer your research questions
4. Developing and reviewing themes
• Reviewing themes to determine if they make sense based on your data and coded quotations
• Develop themes around a central organizing concept
• Determine if there are potential relationships between themes
5. Refining, defining, and naming themes
• Providing a description and definition each theme
• Ensuring the theme is developed and there is a strong central organizing concept
6. Writing up the results
• Provide a persuasive and informative analytical narrative providing evidence that your analysis addresses your research question(s)

Preliminary Results

Current Stage: Preliminary Codes¹ [Figure 1]

- Reviewed interview transcripts
- Began with code labels for potentially relevant and interesting items
- Developed into codes with two coders
- Preliminary codes include three overarching codes: Parent perspectives on ASI information, understanding the why (rationale), and home vs. clinic

Figure 1. Concept Map



Discussion & Conclusion

This research project is part of a pilot research study at CSH examining the effects of ASI for autistic children between 3-5 years of age (Hunt, Schaaf, Van Hooydonk, & Dumont, in preparation). The ASI Parent Education Modules were used in conjunction with individualized ASI intervention (12 sessions) to promote parent learning and understanding of their child's underlying sensory limitations and provide activities to complete at home to promote improved outcomes. Clinicians rely on parents to carryover activities at home to improve patient outcomes. Using a qualitative, phenomenological approach allows the researcher to gain rich, comprehensive data to understand parents' perceptions of the ASI Parent Education Modules, to improve therapist-parent collaboration for children with sensory processing challenges within ASI interventions. As this project progresses I will continue to work with a second researcher to develop codes into themes and report the results to peers, colleagues, and key stakeholders.

References

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