

Teacher Perceptions of Facilitators of & Barriers to a Child's Ability to Regulate Behavior for Learning

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Strong regulation skills are critical for academic success. In the spring of 2020, classroom learning environments dramatically changed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pivot from in-person to virtual learning environments created challenges for students, teachers, and caregivers. Teachers have always had the responsibility to teach students skills for academic and life success; however, they have not always had sufficient support in the classroom to meet the unique needs of each individual student. Teachers need support more than ever as students return to in-person learning from virtual learning environments. Therefore, this study will answer the following: What do teachers perceive as the facilitators and barriers to a child's ability to regulate their behavior in the classroom? This study was conducted at two elementary schools and focused on first through third grade levels. This qualitative study explores what teachers perceive as the facilitators and barriers to a child's ability to regulate their behavior in the classroom using a semi-structured interview. Line by line coding was utilized to create emerging four themes from the data. This study illustrates that sense of community, environment, social interaction skills, and process skills impact learning. Results from this study could inform future programming to support students and teachers with the tools to develop executive function skills to improve learning behavior. It remains clear that student learning success relies on the important interaction and collaboration of the people, community, and environment. Occupational therapists have a unique role, adding value to build alliances between the parent/caregiver, teacher, and health care professionals to support the optimal development for a child (AOTA, 2017). AOTA's position on occupational therapy's expertise in managing the environment to maximize occupational engagement is critical in achieving the overall health and wellness outcomes (AOTA, 2015). The findings of this study can be used to inform program development to support teachers and caregivers of school aged student learners.

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