

AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF DIAGNOSTIC PRACTICES FOR
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EL PASO

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by

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PREVIEW

Abstract

With the prevalence of developmental disabilities on the rise in the United States, it is important that these children are identified and diagnosed as soon as possible so that they may receive appropriate medical treatment and intervention. However, research suggests that there are several factors that influence screening, referral, and diagnostic practices. This study aimed to analyze key themes that arose when parents of children with disabilities and pediatric healthcare providers discussed screening, referral, and diagnostic practices for children in El Paso, a medically underserved community. Researchers conducted a 2- phase study that employed both quantitative and qualitative methodology. Results indicated that there were both similarities and differences in how parents and professionals discuss screening, referral, and diagnostic practices in El Paso. Key themes that parents and professionals discussed included (1) hassles for parents, (2) lack of understanding/ empathy, and (3) a shortage of professionals. Future research should aim to minimize the gap between these views and improve healthcare practices for children with disabilities.

Keywords: developmental disabilities, screening and referral practices, early childhood intervention (ECI), racial/ ethnic healthcare disparities, socioeconomic disparities

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Table of Content.....	vi
List of Tables.....	vii
Chapter 1- Introduction.....	1
Developmental Disabilities.....	1
Developmental Screening Tools.....	1
Early Identification Practices.....	2
Special Considerations for Low- Socioeconomic Status and Minority Groups.....	4
Demography of El Paso, TX.....	5
Environmental Scans.....	5
Chapter 2- Purpose.....	7
Chapter 3- Methods.....	8
Study Design.....	8
Phase 1- Survey.....	8
Participants.....	8
Measure.....	10
Procedures.....	12
Analysis.....	12
Phase 2- Summit.....	12
Participants.....	12
Procedures.....	14
Analysis.....	14
Chapter 4- Results.....	14
Phase 1.....	15
What services do you need but are not available to you?	15
What is working well in the community in meeting the needs of children with disabilities?.....	16
What is not working well in the community in meeting the needs of children with disabilities?	16

What are barriers that you experience in receiving services?	16
What are gaps in services that you see?	16
Phase 2.....	17
Hassles for parents.....	17
Lack of communication and collaboration among professionals.....	18
Lack of guidance.....	18
Lack of understanding/ empathy.....	18
Shortage of professionals.....	18
Personnel training.....	19
University Curriculum.....	19
Chapter 5- Discussion.....	21
Themes.....	21
Parents and Professionals.....	24
Room for Growth.....	25
Limitations.....	26
Future Directions.....	26
Conclusion.....	27
References.....	29
Vita.....	33

List of Tables

Table 1- Phase 1 Participant by Profession.....	9
Table 2- Phase 1 Participants by Total Household Income.....	10
Table 3- Phase 1 Survey.....	12
Table 4- Ratings of Services.....	15
Table 5- Issues in the diagnostic process for children with disabilities.....	19-20

PREVIEW