



Developmental Delay and Transition to School Services

Macey McDaniel, OTD; Dr. Sarah C. Tucker, PhD, OTR/L

Department of Occupational Therapy | University of Alabama at Birmingham

Julia Stanley, M.S. Early Intervention | AIDB Birmingham Regional Center

Introduction

Background:

- The CDC (2024) reports one in six children in the United States has a developmental disability.
- The early intervention (EI) system provides services from birth to age three with developmental delays (ADRS).
- ADRS states that EI assists families in transitioning three-year-olds to school services.
- Intimidating wording of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) was identified by researchers as a barrier for parents (Smith & Krieg,2022).
- Parents had negative experiences of the transition process due to confusion surrounding the special education system (Waters & Friesen, 2019).
- Occupational therapy (OT) practitioners are a part of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team and provide services to children and families (Muhlenhaupt et al.,2015).

Purpose:

- The purpose of this project was to design and implement a program to increase knowledge of the transition process of caregivers of children transitioning to school system services and aid them in learning how to advocate for their children's education and services received.

Methods

Design Type: Program Development

Participants:

- Parents of children receiving services from AIDB Birmingham EI Program

Resource Development:

- Observed numerous transition meetings with service coordinators and families
- Reviewed available resources on transition process
- Met with site mentor and staff member responsible for the newsletter to determine topics of resource
- Topics:
 - Common abbreviations
 - Meetings parents will attend
 - IEPs (Individualized Education Plans)
 - 504 Plans
- Created resource with supervision of site mentor to ensure most accurate information would be provided to families

Survey and Distribution:

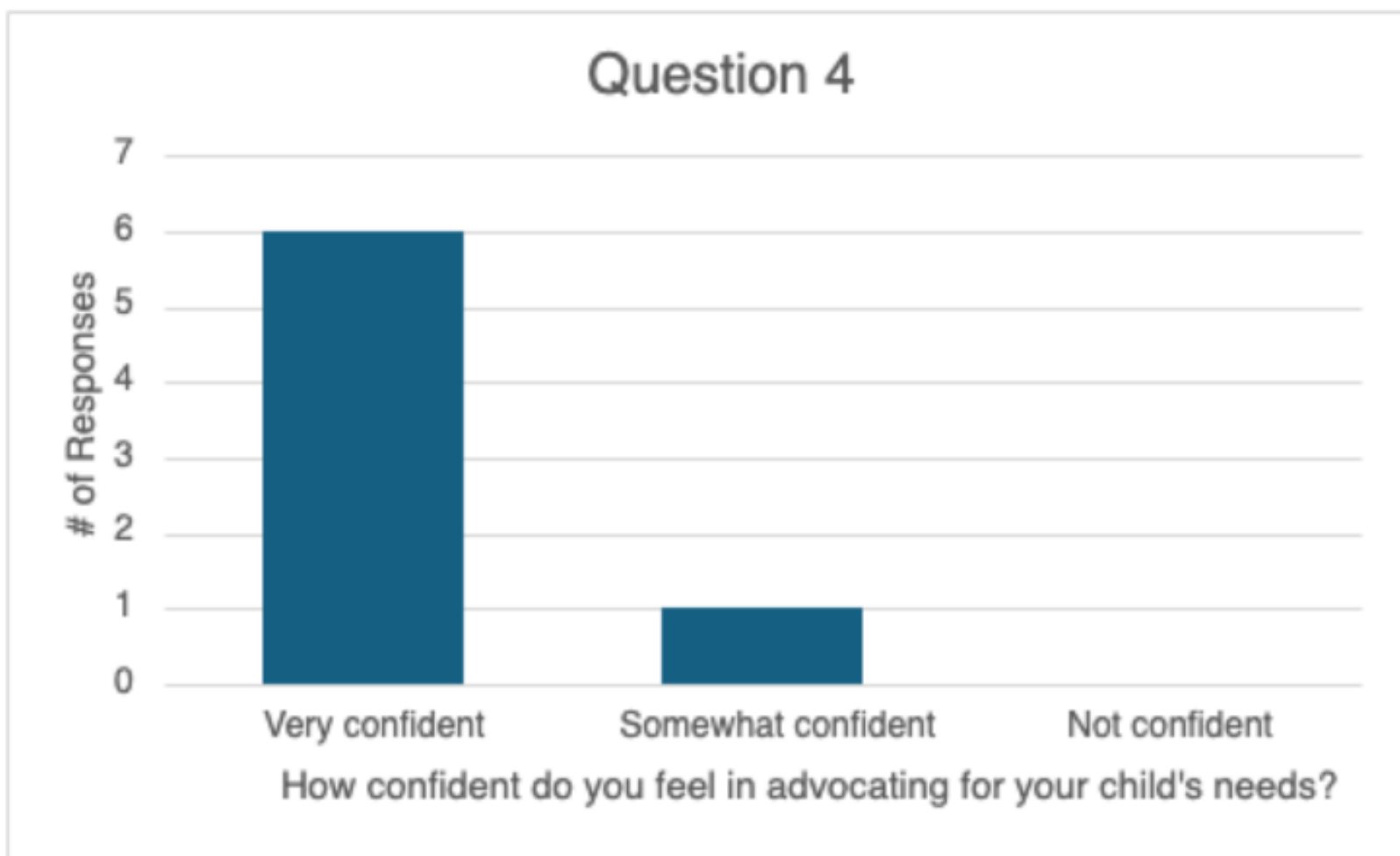
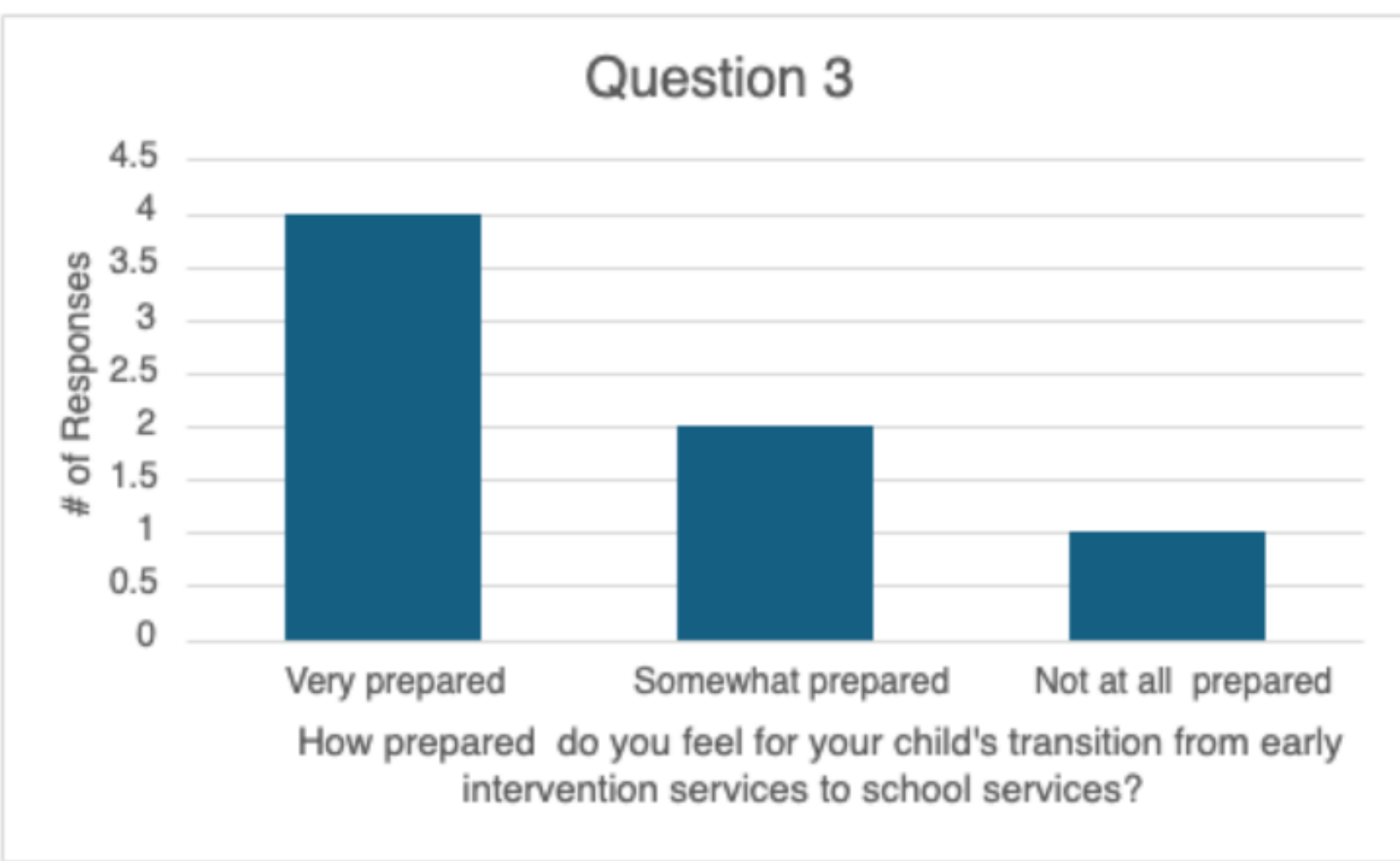
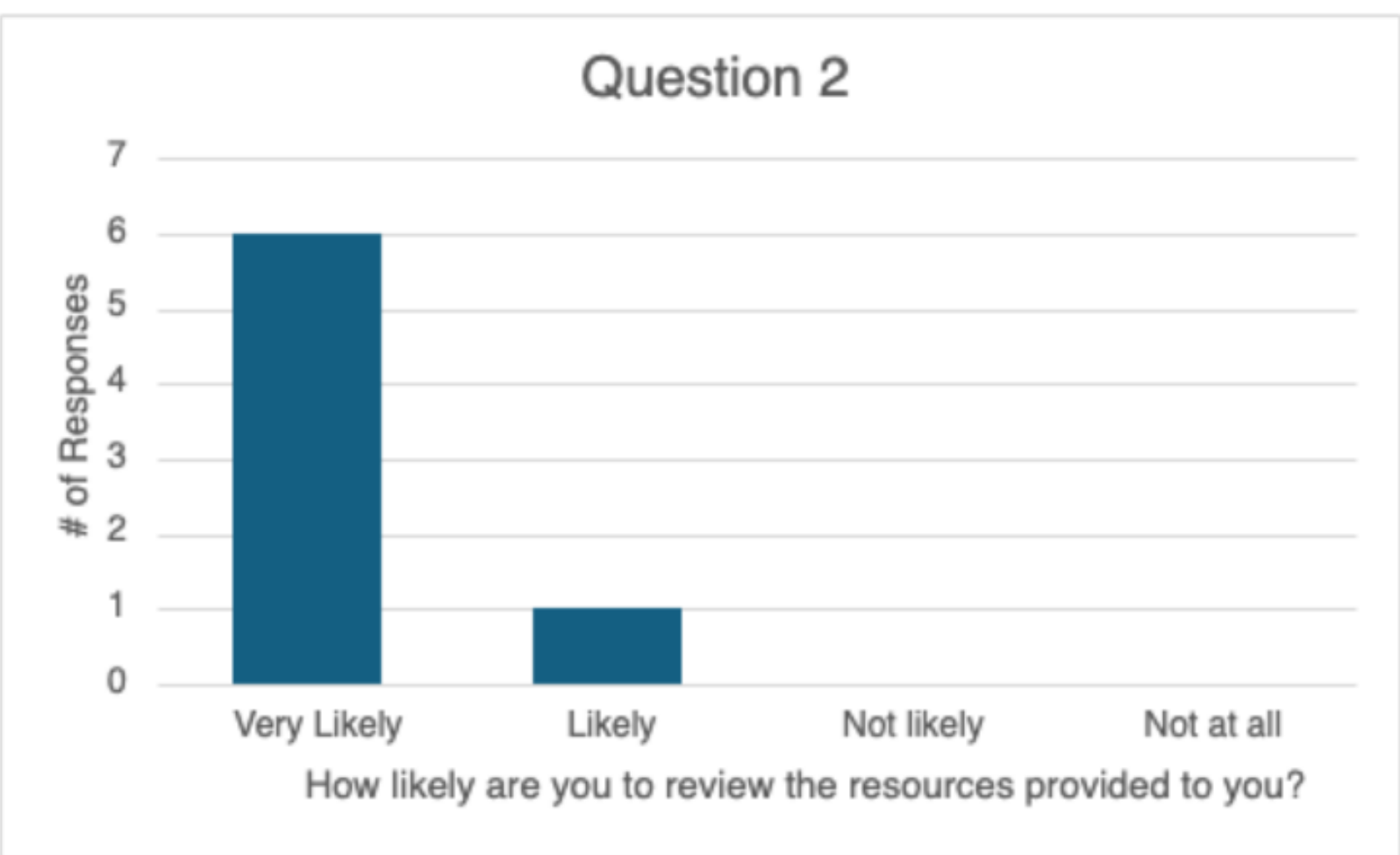
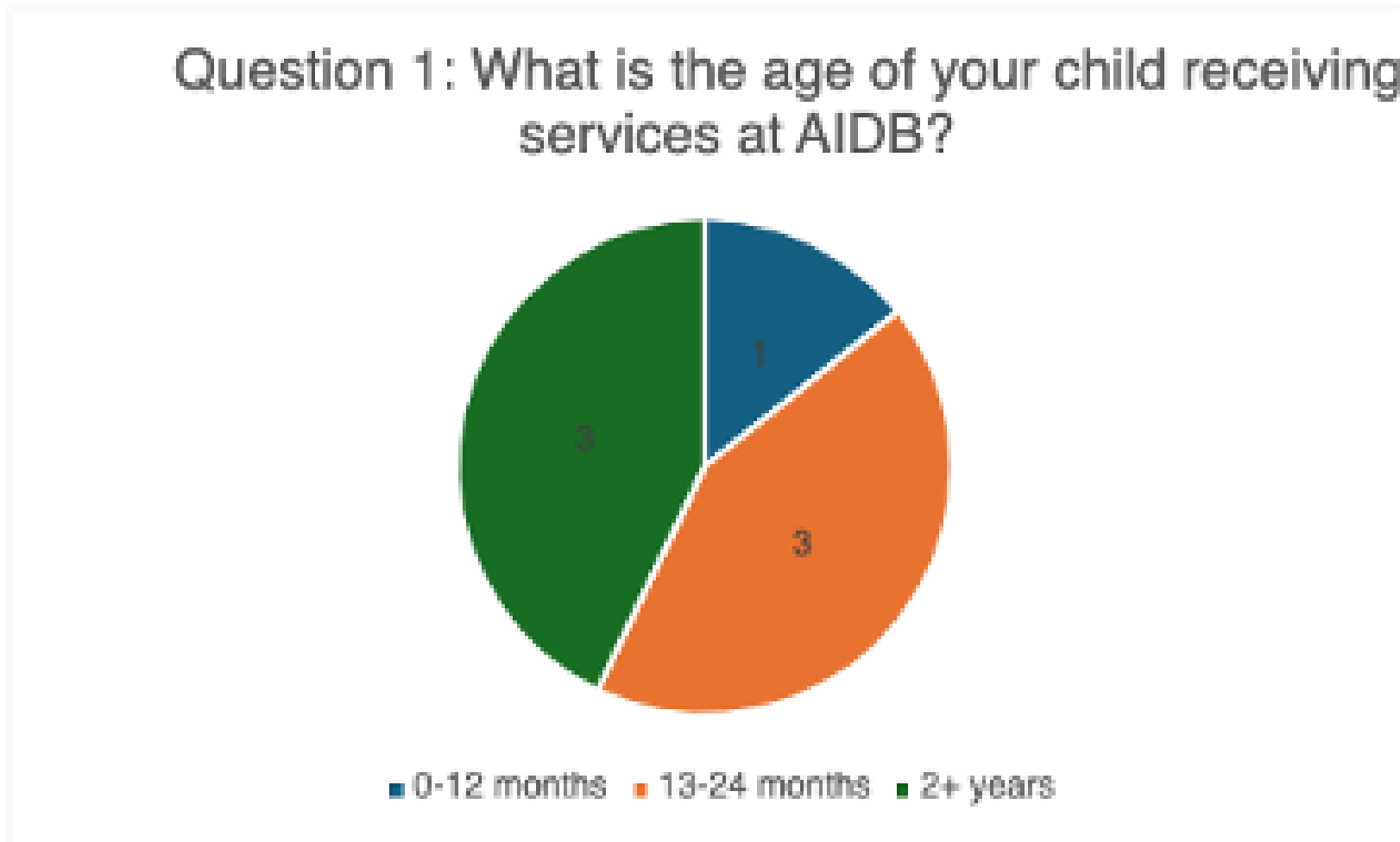
- Utilized the Qualtrics platform to allow families to complete an optional feedback survey
- Distributed transition resource through newsletter to families receiving services through AIDB

Results

Total:

- 7 parents completed the survey
- 3 parents completed the open response question
 - "Great info for new parents"
 - "Love it"
 - "It was great!"

Results



Discussion

Project Findings

- A total of 7 resource pages was created that included the topics determined by program developer and sit mentor
- Finding of this study are similar to previous studies that demonstrate parents are eager to engage in resources.
- There is a potential to facilitate feelings of confidence and preparedness by providing informational materials to parents.
- OT practitioners can support can educate families and promote resources

Limitations

- Survey responses were not limited to parents in low-socioeconomic communities.
- The developed resource and survey were only available in English
- Internet access was required to complete survey

Implications for OT Practice

- OT's role is not limited to service delivery but also has a responsibility to support parents through the transition process to school services.

Future Research/Projects:

- Perspectives of developed resource pre and post experience of transition process.
- Program development educating parents who have children with established IEPs.

Conclusion

This project has provided a resource to the families receiving services from the AIDB Birmingham Regional Center EI program. The findings of this study show that parents overall have a positive mindset towards the transition process prior to completing the experience. Future research may examine the feelings of parents who have experienced this process and had access to the resource.

References

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CONTACT INFO: Macey McDaniel: mlmcdani@uab.edu