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# Elopement Prevention: Promoting Safety and Supporting Participation

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# Elopement Prevention: Promoting Safety and Supporting Participation

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Faculty Mentor: Teresa Plummer PhD, OTR/L, ATP, CEAS, CAPS  
Expert Mentor: Krissy Kalemeris Madison PT, DPT, CPST

## Mission and Vision

Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt:  
**Mission:** "Through the exceptional capabilities and caring spirit of its people, Vanderbilt will lead in improving the healthcare of individuals and communities regionally, nationally and internationally. We will combine our transformative learning programs and compelling discoveries to provide distinctive personal care."

**Vision:**  
• Deliver the highest quality medical care to children.  
• Create a special environment for children and their families.

**Seating and Mobility Clinic Goals:**  
• To improve positioning and support functional independence.

## AGENCY NEEDS

- Strategies to improve the experience of caregivers whose children need adaptive beds, strollers, and car seats due to elopement concerns.
- Educational handouts to meet the needs of families whose children elope.
- Tools to improve the safety of clinic visits and to increase comfort for children with Autism.

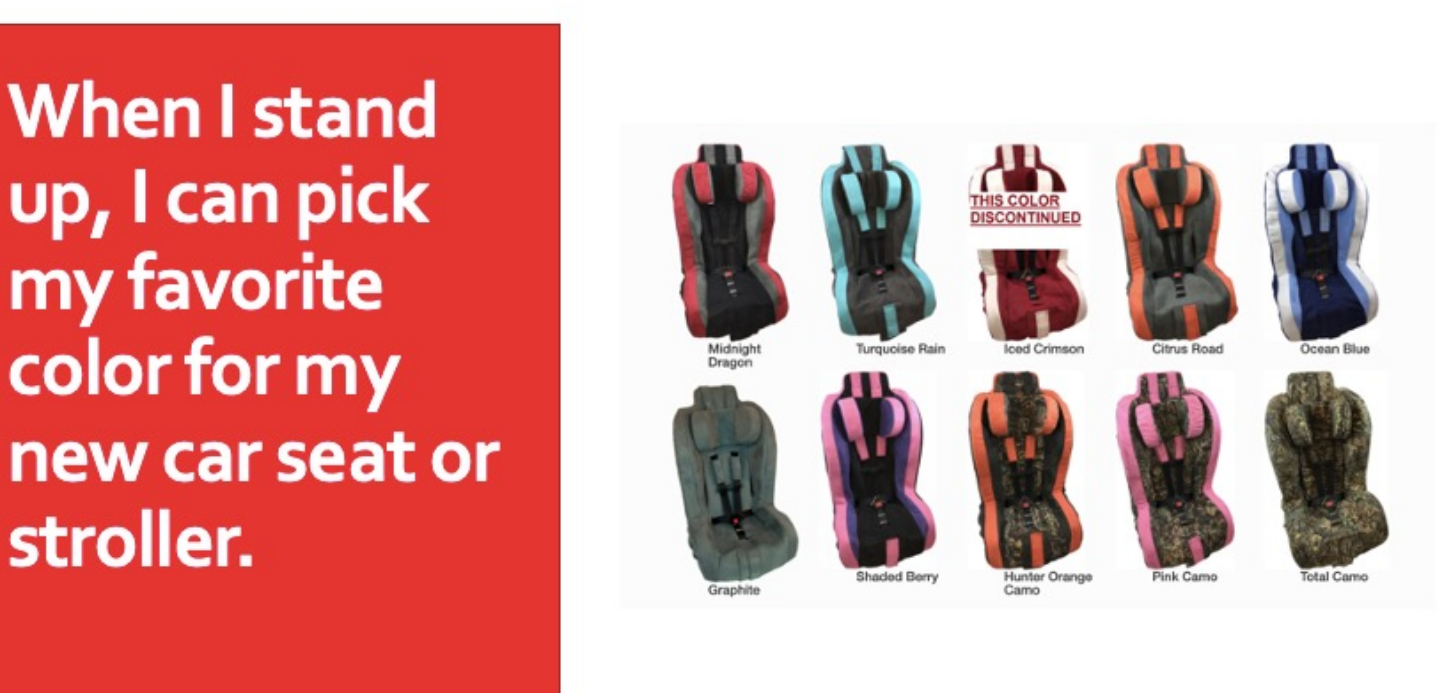
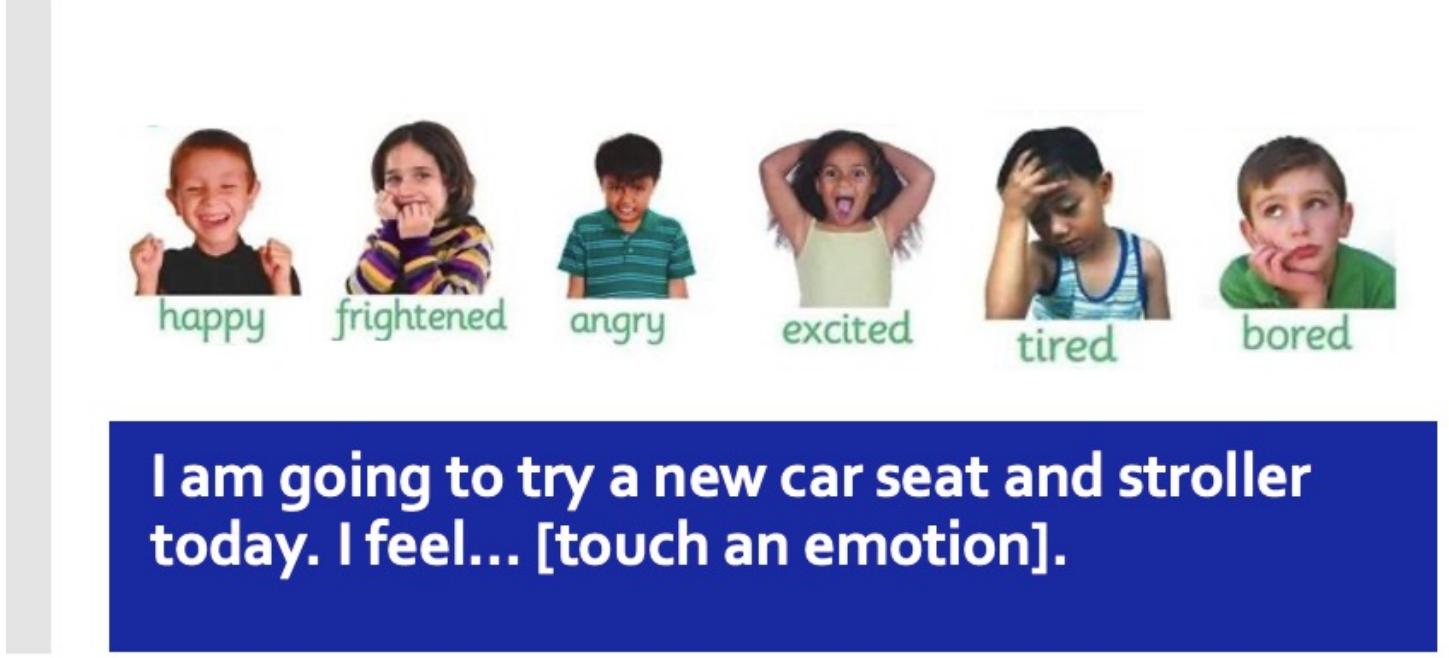
## GOALS

- Create a presentation geared towards occupational therapists about elopement prevention.
- Provide evidence-based solutions for elopement prevention.
- Develop strategies to improve elopement equipment visits.
- Gain certification in advanced practice areas.

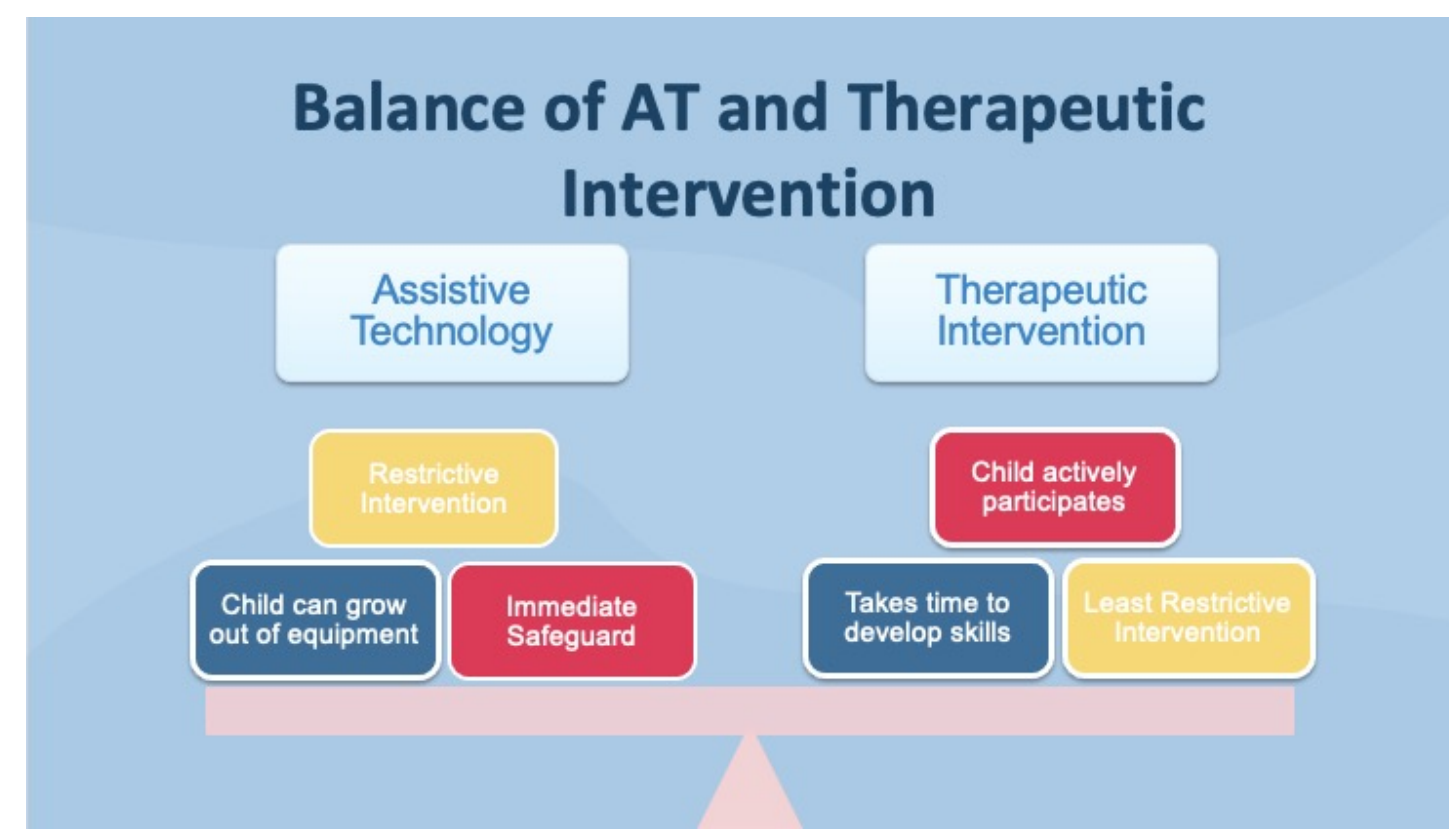
## CPST CERTIFICATION



## SOCIAL STORY



## OT and ELOPEMENT PRESENTATION



## SENSORY BOX



## HANDOUTS

### What is Elopement?

Elopement: when a child leaves a supervised space or the safety of a responsible adult. This can lead to harm by placing the child in danger.

If your child has eloped call 911!

Where Does Elopement Typically Occur?

- Home
- Vehicle
- School
- Community

Why Do Children Elope?

- Trying to escape sensory input or a non-preferred task
- Difficulty communicating a need/want
- Trying to get to something they enjoy
- Trying to initiate social interaction (i.e. a game of chase)

### Behavior Management Strategies for Elopement

Identify the Reason for Elopement:

- Difficulty Communicating
- Need for a Break
- Wanting Social Interaction
- Sensory Input
- Non-Preferred Task
- Access
- Environment
- Item of Interest
- Special Topics

Set Clear Expectations

- First-Then
- Reward Charts

Provide Sensory Supports

- Fidget Toys
- Weighted Lap Pad
- Sunglasses
- Headphones

Provide Visual Schedules

- Increase Predictability
- Communicate Breaks

Practice Safety Skills

- Stop and Wait
- Stay with Me
- Asking for a Break
- Wearing Seat Belt

Resources

- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Vanderbilt TRIAD

## OUTCOMES

- Developed a social story for visits to Vanderbilt Pediatric Seating and Mobility Clinic.
- Created handouts for caregivers regarding elopement prevention strategies.
- Created handout regarding car seat care.
- Assembled a sensory toolbox for clinic visits.
- Recorded presentation about elopement prevention strategies geared towards occupational therapists.
- Gained CPST certification.
- Developed a "smart phrase" documentation to justify elopement prevention equipment.

## QR CODES



Handouts



Presentation



Social Story

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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- The faculty and staff of Belmont University's School of Occupational Therapy for demonstrating professionalism and excellence in all that they do.

\*References Available Upon Request