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BEST Screening: Introducing the Neonatal Assessment Visual European Grid to NICUs in Tennessee

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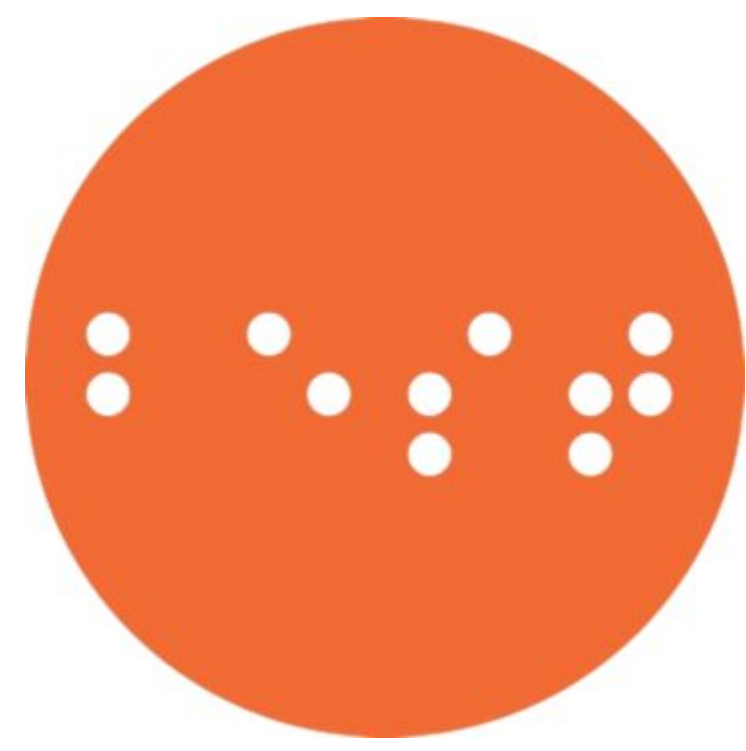
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BEST Screening: Introducing the Neonatal Assessment Visual European Grid to NICUs in Tennessee

Gabrielle Sledge, Occupational Therapy Student
Blind Early Services Tennessee



“To ensure every child born in the state of Tennessee with blindness or low vision is provided seamless access to a comprehensive and specialized system of support to give their child his or her BEST start in life.”

About BEST

Blind Early Services Tennessee (BEST) is an early intervention agency that serves children 0-5 who have been diagnosed with or are suspected of having any form of visual impairment. BEST was founded in 2020 by 2 moms, Alison and Stacy, of little boys with visual impairments. Upon their sons' diagnoses, they were told that vision services would be available to their children once they entered the school system at age 3. As they realized that early intervention vision services did not exist in Tennessee, they joined forces to create the resource they so desperately wanted for their children. Today, BEST serves over 200 children and families across the state offering early intervention (BEST Start), parent empowerment (BEST Advocate), and family support (BEST Together) programming with the goal of continued growth.

Agency Needs

- Connection to NICU practitioners in order to discuss potential partnership in administering the NAVEG and/or possibility of conducting a research study to contribute to the literature on the NAVEG
- Creative, consistent, and concise caregiver resources
- Assistance in administrative tasks regarding APH Quota, TEIS contract renewal, and future programming

Project Goals

- Receive complete training on administration of the NAVEG
- Contact NICUs in Tennessee to gauge interest in learning about the NAVEG
- Offer training to NICUs interested in the NAVEG
- Create variety of caregiver resources to be disseminated via BEST's website, social media, and newsletter
- Provide administrative help as needed
- Increase clinical skills regarding visual interventions for infants and children through treatment observation

Outcomes

- Dissemination of a variety of resources including more than 20 social media posts (Tuesday Tidbits), 3 newsletters, and over 50 website additions
- Contact made with all 25 NICUs in Tennessee
- In-service presentation at the Children's Hospital at Erlanger regarding the NAVEG and subsequent meetings scheduled
- Connection between BEST client and Belmont School of Occupational Therapy through Go-Baby-Go program

Implications for the Future

- Bringing the NAVEG to Tennessee allows for children with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) to be detected earlier, and therefore, potentially remediated.
- Continued provision of accessible caregiver resources through social media will broaden BEST's reach within the state of Tennessee and beyond.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Alison Clougherty and Stacy Cornwall for seeing the value of OT in vision services and allowing me to play a small part in your organization this semester. I have spent this semester in awe of your determination and seamless execution of desperately needed programs in Tennessee. Thank you to LeeAnn McWhorter and Cat Saig for willingly opening up your schedule to me to allow me the opportunity to gain clinical experience by observing treatment sessions. To Dr. Teresa Plummer, thank you for being such an invaluable resource during this project. Your endless bounty of resources, contacts, and encouragement were so helpful in making this project the best it could be.

Deliverables

- Website: blindearlyservices.org
- Instagram: @blindearlyservices



How is the NAVEG Administered?

17 total items split into 3 sections: ocular, motor, and perceptual

Ocular

- Pupillary Light Reflex
- Red Reflex
- Eye Abnormalities
- Fundus Abnormalities

Motor

- Fixation
- Horizontal/Vertical Smooth Pursuits
- Saccadic Movements
- Erratic Eye Movements
- Sunsetting
- Nystagmus
- Paroxysmal Deviation
- Strabismus

Perceptual

- Contrast Sensitivity
- Visual Acuity
- Visual Field
- Optokinetic Nystagmus

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