

Background. The Focus on the Outcomes of Communication Under Six (FOCUS) is a validated parent-report outcome measure that captures change in preschoolers' communicative participation during speech-language therapy. Despite being co-developed with end users, implementation has been difficult in Ontario's Preschool Speech and Language (PSL) program, where it is currently used for program evaluation with over 60,000 children each year. The existing formats (paper and fillable PDF) are a key implementation barrier because they prevent clinicians from easily accessing the change scores, which are needed to interpret outcomes. This means caregivers rarely get feedback about children's progress. A digital solution is urgently needed to improve service efficiencies and evidence-informed decisions about children's communicative participation, facilitate transparency following outcome measurement, and better integrate caregivers' voices into the clinical measurement process.

Objectives. This project aimed to understand caregivers' experiences completing the FOCUS in its current formats, outcome measurement needs, and preferred features and formats for a digital solution.

Methods. Fifteen caregivers of preschoolers with communication impairments and experience completing the FOCUS participated in virtual synchronous focus group sessions that lasted 30-60 minutes. Following a brief introduction and description of the intended purpose and function of the FOCUS in the Ontario PSL program, five broad interview questions were asked to elicit caregivers' experiences, perceptions, and preferences. A series of probes were used to elicit responses as necessary. Transcripts were reviewed for accuracy and data were coded and analyzed using the thematic analysis methodology proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021).

Results. Four major themes were identified: (1) caregivers' current experiences with and expectations for outcome measurement (2) caregivers need support to complete the FOCUS (3) caregivers believe a digital solution would improve their service experience (4) caregivers' suggested features, format, and considerations for a digital FOCUS. Each theme had associated sub-themes.

Conclusion. Integrating caregivers' perspectives and needs in health research is critical to ensuring outputs are meaningful and can be used to build sustainable, accessible, and equitable services. Results will be used to inform future efforts to improve utility of the FOCUS for families in Ontario's PSL Program.