

Project Title

Peek-A-Boo: I Know What My Child Does In The Classroom

Project Lead and Members

Project lead: Chong Cai Yun

Organisation(s) Involved

SPD: Serving People with Disabilities

Project Period

Start date: 05/2018

Completed date: Ongoing

Aims

To have a centralised platform to optimise our caregiver engagement efforts

Background

Over the years, SPD has been conducting a suite of training and wellness activities for caregivers of children with developmental needs. However, not all caregivers are able to attend due to work or other commitments. Similarly, caregiver resources were not well-utilised as caregivers need to be at the centre to access them.

Communication with caregivers was also done primarily via conventional methods such as phone calls and hardcopy letters. This limited effective outreach to caregivers as those who missed the calls or letters may miss out on important updates relating to their child. The lack of a common platform to consolidate these parent-centre communications also mean that caregivers need to spend additional time organising these information in order to make more informed decisions for their child. To optimise our caregiver engagement efforts and ensure that our communication with caregivers do not get lost in transition, there is a need for us to consolidate these information in a centralised platform.

Looking at the various software available in the market, we decided to adopt an online system commonly used by preschools in Singapore to streamline operations. This system not only include multiple features (e.g. learning, health, and communications) in one platform for ease of usage by professionals, it also allows caregivers to access content shared by the professionals through a mobile app. Leveraging on this smart solution, we hope to improve caregiver engagement by bringing caregivers straight into the child's classroom experience without the need to be physically present.

Methods

Before embarking on the project, the team consulted managers and key early intervention professionals to gain a better overview of the challenges faced when engaging caregivers. A survey was also conducted with caregivers to understand their perceived level of engagement and the areas of support they needed.

Taking reference from preschools in Singapore which operate similarly as our early intervention centres, the team has identified a software commonly used to streamline preschool operations and foster greater parent-school communication. Named the Preschool Management System (PSMS), it helps preschool do away with having multiple systems for communications, learning, and health as it combines these features under a single platform. Caregivers will also benefit as there is a mobile app for them to receive instant updates shared by professionals about their child's progress or activities in the centre.

To prepare for the implementation of the PSMS, the team embarked on the planning phase which involved creating workflow and action plans, as well as migration of client and staff records to the system. Briefings were also provided to staff before we let them trial the system for a month. A few caregivers were also selected to take part in the trial for parents. A post-trial survey was conducted with staff and caregivers to finetune our Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Following the successful trial, the team went on to prepare for the official launch of the system. Caregivers were introduced to the system through letters and briefings.

The features were launched in phases to give staff and caregivers more time to adapt to the new system.

Results

A survey was conducted in November 2019 to gather caregivers' feedback after using the PSMS for a period of time. Over 95% of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the portal and, find it useful and easy to use.

Besides the positive response from caregivers, the introduction of the system provided us with a centralised hub to communicate with caregivers, and share resources with caregivers at a regular interval.

The scalability of this project has also made it possible for other SPD programmes to use the system. The SPD Continuing Therapy Programme (CTP) has embarked on this system to engage their caregivers since January 2020. With minor changes to the workflow and SOPs, the CTP team was able to implement the system with ease. This system can potentially help to engage over 100 CTP caregivers and they can now enjoy the same benefits as the caregivers in our early intervention programme.

Lessons Learnt

When rolling out any new initiatives, it is important to consider the users' perspective and anticipate the challenges they will potentially face, as well as the support that they will need to adapt to these changes. The adoption of a new technology in our case is a significant change for both staff and caregivers alike, as this meant that they need to adopt new ways of doing things. As they are the end users of the system, it is important to involve them during the planning phase, so that we can better understand their needs and plan ahead for the challenges that may arise during implementation. When the project is launched, it is also crucial to create a supportive environment to ensure that staff and caregivers will not be overwhelmed with the changes. Planning the launch in a gradual manner helps to ease their transition, and it is also key to communicate the changes clearly and promptly.

Lastly, change does not always come easy, but it remains a constant for us to stay relevant to our stakeholders. Keeping an open mind to the different possibilities definitely helps, and don't be afraid to explore novel ways of doing things, especially if they allow you to advance or enhance the good work that you are already doing.

Conclusion

Overall, the implementation of the PSMS has enabled us to engage caregivers more effectively. By keeping caregivers informed of their child's progress, it could encourage greater family involvement which is crucial in the child's development. The possibilities of technology have also driven us to actively think of unconventional ideas to better reach out to caregivers. With this, SPD will continue to actively review and refine our technological solutions that empower us to do even more in terms of providing family and client-centric service.

Additional Information

Winner of the AIC Community Care Excellence Awards 2020 – Team Award, Client Experience Improvement category

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy7APasww3w&ab_channel=AICSingapore

Project Category

Process Improvement

Keywords

Process Improvement, Technology Caregivers Engagement, Serving People With Disabilities (SPD), Communications, Children, Parents

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[SPD] Chong Cai Yun



Serving people with disabilities since 1964



What is the project about and why do we need to work on this?

SPD has been conducting training and wellness activities for caregivers of children with special needs. However, not all caregivers were able to attend due to work or other commitments.

Similarly, caregiver resources were not well-utilised as caregivers need to be at the centre to access them.

Communication with caregivers was done primarily via conventional methods such as phone calls and hardcopy letters. Caregivers may also miss out updates on their child if they did not pick up these calls or letters.

To optimise our caregiver engagement efforts and ensure that our communication with caregivers do not get lost in transition, there is a need for us to consolidate these information in a centralised platform. As most caregivers own a smartphone today, it has made it possible for us to re-imagine how we can use technology to integrate information under one roof to better engage caregivers.



Project Goal

To adopt an online system commonly used by preschools in Singapore to streamline operations.



What solutions have been implemented?

Taking reference from preschools in Singapore which operate similarly as our early intervention centres, the team identified a software commonly used to streamline preschool operations and foster greater parent school communication.

Named the **Preschool Management System (PSMS)**, it helps preschool do away with having multiple systems for communications, learning, and health as it combines these features under a single platform.

Caregivers will also benefit as there is a mobile app for them to receive instant updates shared by professionals about their child's progress or activities in the centre. Following are the features offered by the selected online system.


Client Management
Record clients and caregivers' basic information


Attendance
Record clients' attendance, temperatures and visual health check (e.g. HFMD)


Communications
Facilitate communication between staff and parents; upload announcements


Portfolio
Document child's photos, videos and Individualised Education Plan (IEP) / Progress Report


Bulletin
Share events calendar and resources with caregivers


Centre Log
Record and track incidents and follow-up actions.

A mobile app known as **Little Family Room** is also available for caregivers to download and receive child related updates from the centre. A series of actions were taken by the project team before the launch of the online system and mobile app.

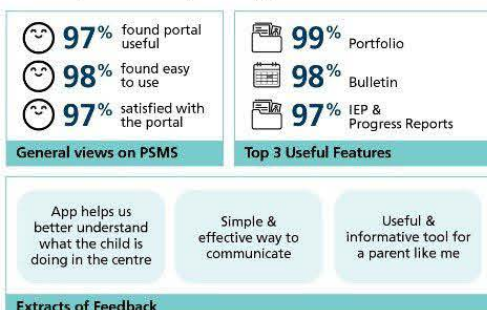


Result

Positive response from caregivers was received and the use of the PSMS has also enabled us to reach out to caregivers more effectively, and has provided a platform for us to update caregivers with more engaging content.

Caregiver Feedback on PSMS

Total responses: 268 | Survey period: Nov 2019



Next Steps

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This system can potentially help to engage over 100* CTP caregivers and they can now enjoy the same benefits as the caregivers in our early intervention programme.