



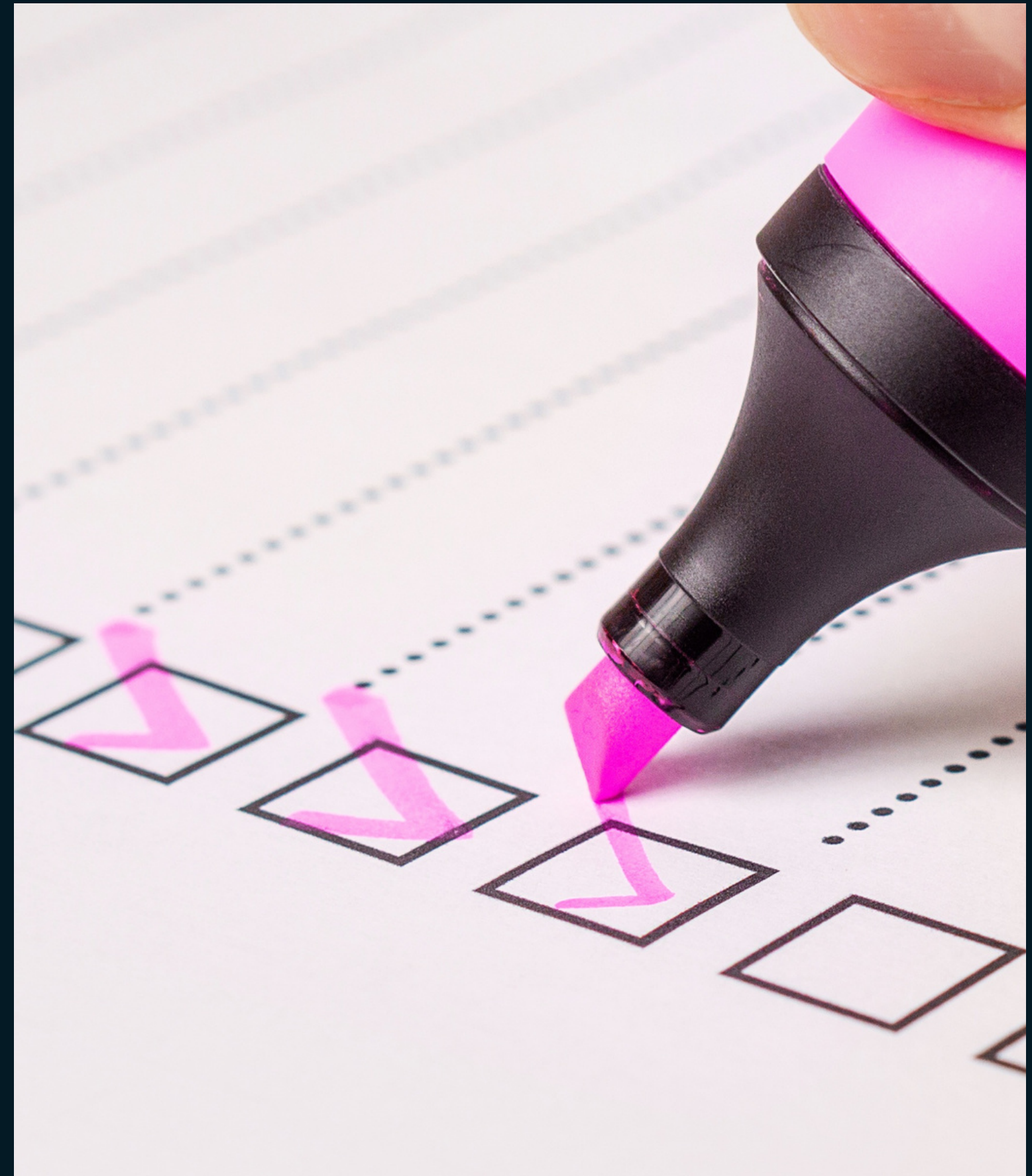
# Impact of remote learning on school-based occupational therapy

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LEND Trainee 2020-2021

# Agenda

1. Problem
2. Research Methods
3. Findings
4. Dissemination
5. Future Direction





# LEND Competencies

## Competency 5: Research and Critical Thinking

- 5.1 Critically review literature (evidence, design, sample size, CI's, statistical tests)
- 5.2 Demonstrate skills in access/utilization of electronic information, resources and databases
- 5.3 Gain experience with designing, revising, implementing and evaluating a research project
- 5.4 Demonstrate basic competencies in professional writing
- 5.5 Demonstrate verbal presentation skills including use of PowerPoint and auditory augmentation system
- 5.6 Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of research and surveillance on programs/policy

# Problem

**Question:** How has the sudden shift to remote learning affected school-based occupational therapy services in New Mexico?

**Purpose of the study:** To gather information on occupational therapy services in schools during COVID-19







# Why is this important?

In order to prepare for the needs of students and teachers next year, we need to know how services may have been disrupted or disconnected from the classroom.

We need to know what worked in order to shape future virtual services.

Occupational therapists are vital to ensuring student and teacher success.

Knowing how occupational therapy services were affected is related to the barriers teachers, students, and even parents faced.



# Methods



## Literature Review

A web based search in AJOT, Google scholar, and Google to find studies evaluating occupational therapy in schools during COVID



## IRB Approval

IRB was needed due do collection of information from people via online platform.



## Online Survey

A survey with multiple choice and open ended questions was shared on social media pages of UNM's OTGP and NMOTA.



# Literature Review

Local news story highlighted parent concern that students with special needs are **not receiving the resources they need to succeed in school**. (Hayes, 2020)

Ability to “attend” school was further impacted by **limited internet access** with about **23%** of student’s lacking internet access at the beginning of the pandemic (McKay, 2020)

Commerce Independent School District in TX reported educational challenges included: **Adjust to new environment, need of support beyond education, continuation of IEP goal progress, communication with team members, supporting teachers** (Tremmel et al, 2020)



# Survey Findings



# Demographics



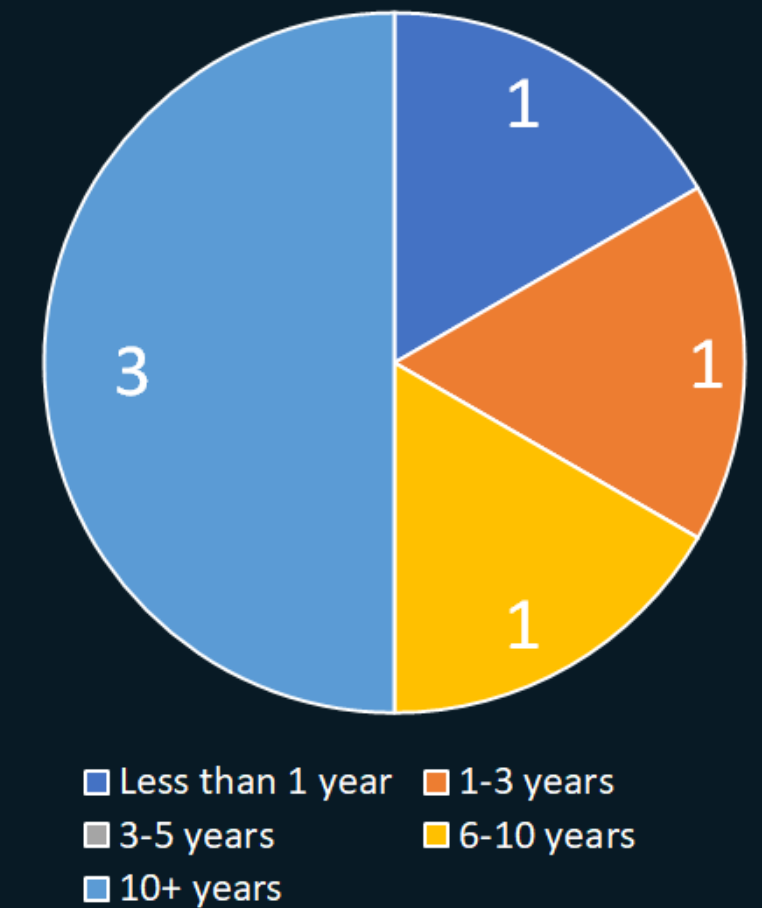
## Region

Six respondents total, 2 from Central NM and 4 from Southwest NM

## Populations

Early childhood (n=3)  
Elementary School (n=4)  
Middle School (n=5)  
High School (n=4)

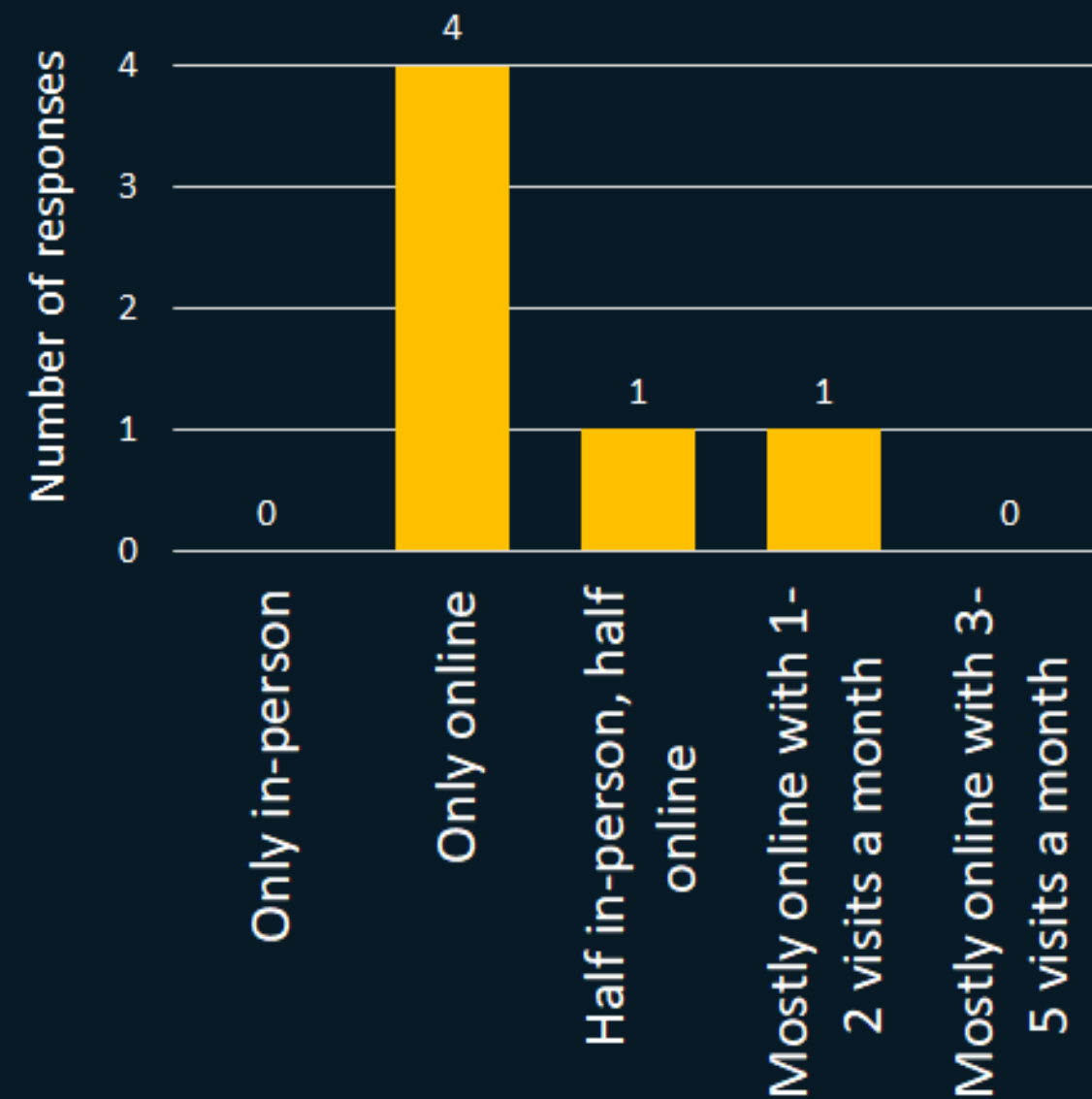
## Years of experience



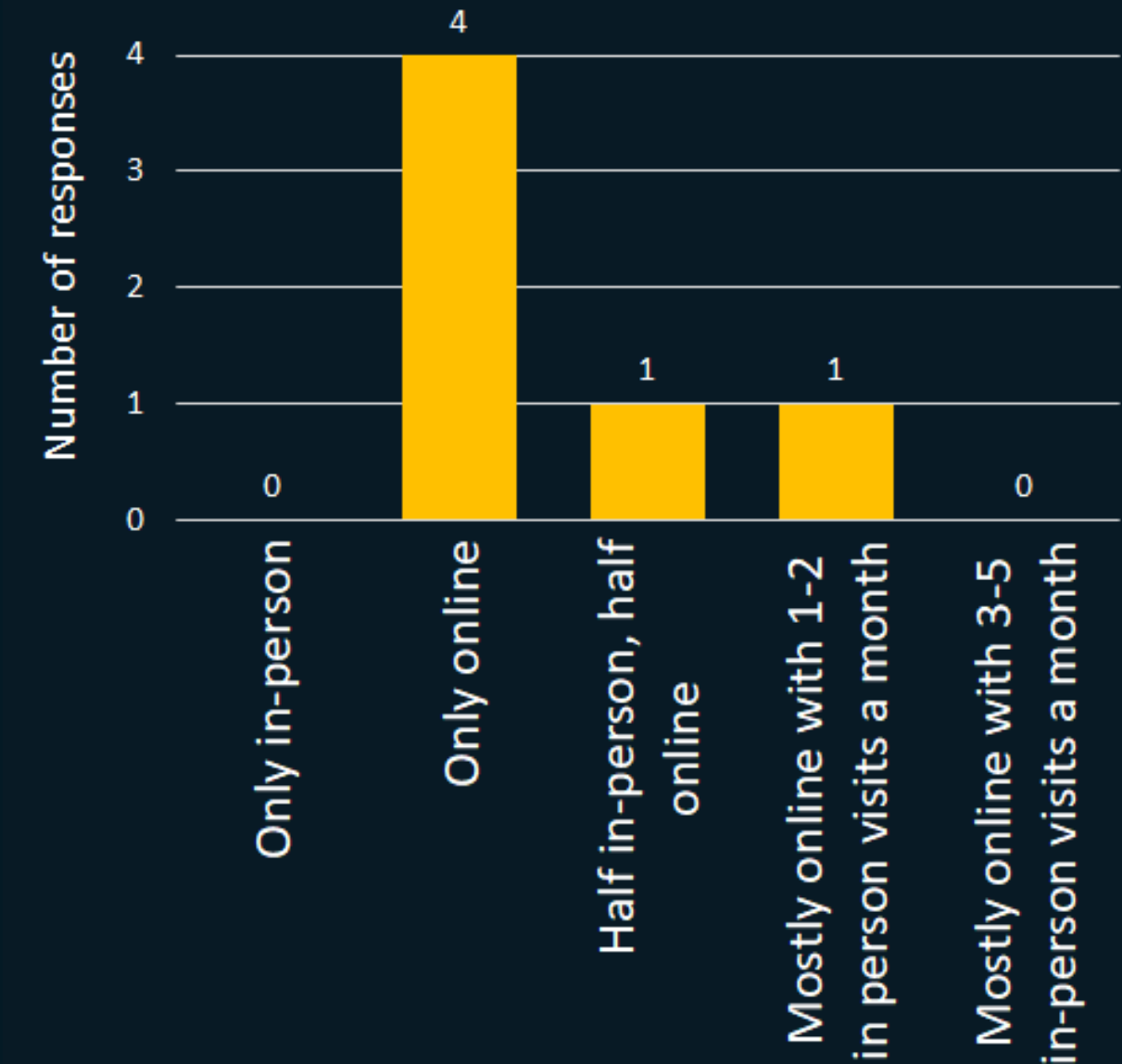


# Participation Platforms in Fall 2020

## Occupational therapy services



## School Participation





# Themes: Impact on Students

## Attendance

“Some students never attended school during remote learning but were still officially enrolled.”

“Many do not show up to classes or know how to use the technology independently”

## Goal Progression

“I’ve seen a large number of my caseload regress in fine motor, sensory processing and self regulation skills.”

“Some students really thrived with online learning and made progress in fine motor skills and writing ability”

## Focus/Attention

“Many students had increased difficulty focusing on schoolwork.”

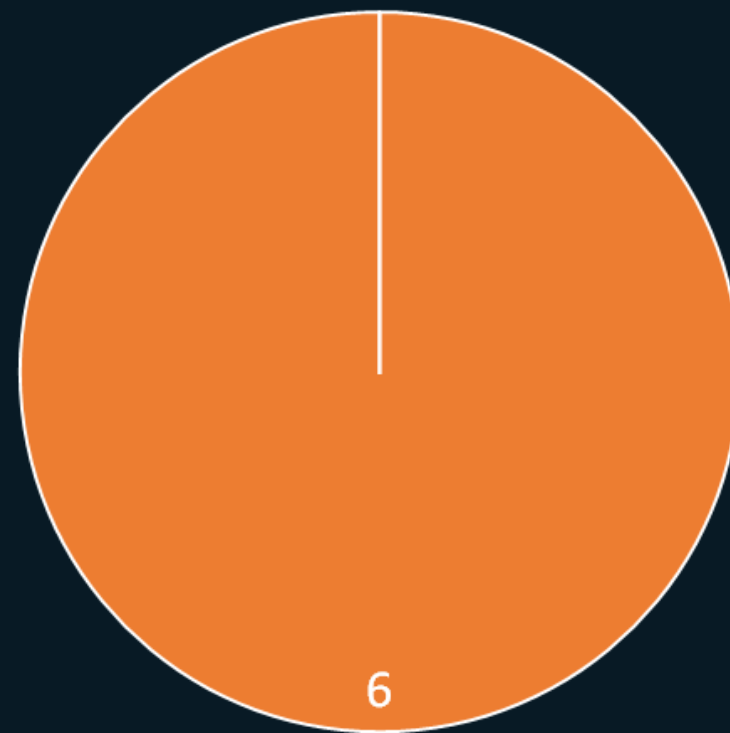
“Showing decreased tolerance for online instruction, decreased attention, and increased negative behaviors.”



# Decreased participation and increased caseloads

## School participation

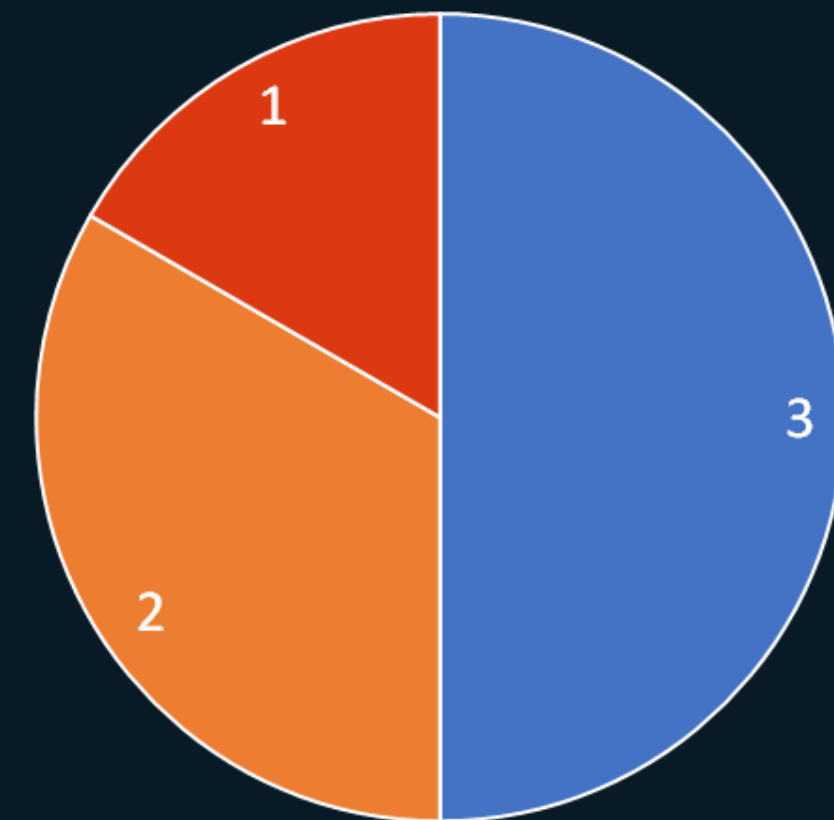
Compared to the fall 2019 semester, all respondents reported decreased participation of students in fall 2020



■ Increased in fall 2020 ■ Decreased in fall 2020 ■ Stayed the same

## OT Caseload

3 respondents reported an increase in caseload fall 2020 semester



■ Increased in fall 2020 ■ Decreased in fall 2020 ■ Stayed the same





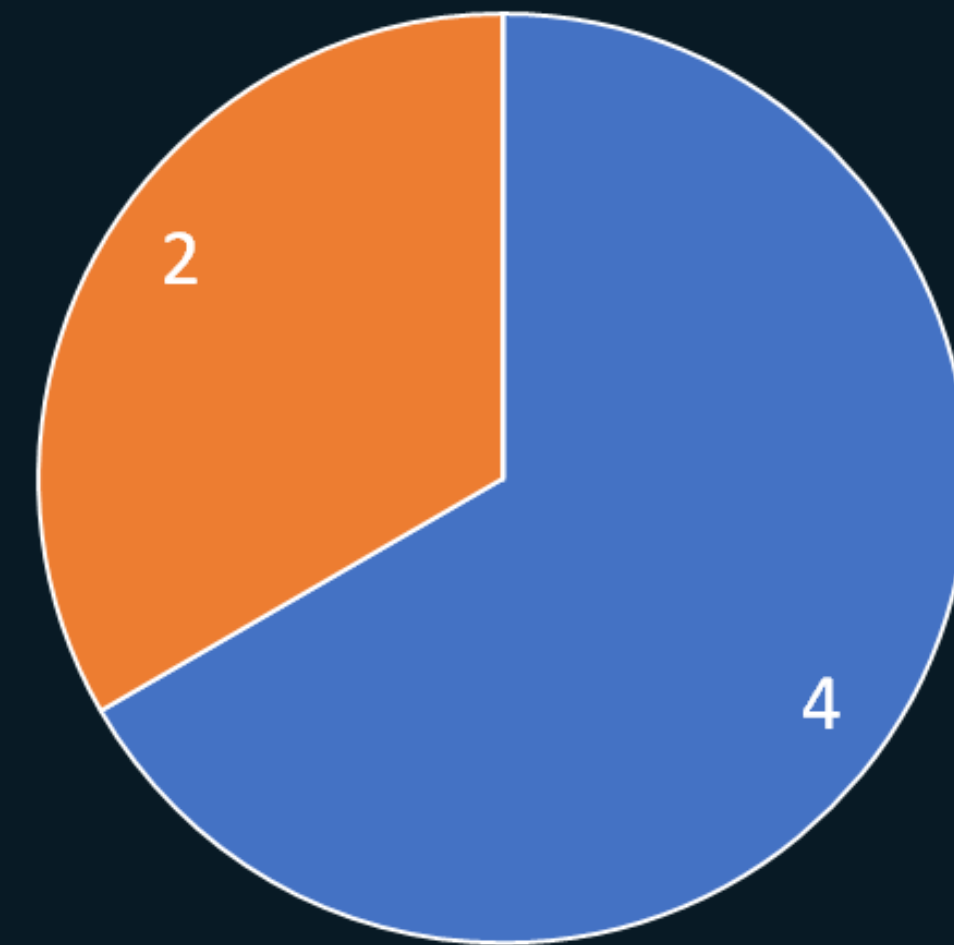
# OT-Parent interaction changes

66.7% reported an **increase** in parent interaction in the fall 2020 semester when compared to the fall 2019 semester

33.3% reported a **decrease** in parent interaction

It is not clear whether the decrease in parental interaction was due to decreased attendance or other reasons.

"Some families feel more involved and understand IEP goals"



■ Increased in fall 2020 ■ Decreased in fall 2020 ■ Stayed the same



# Themes: Student Support Needs

**Teaching technology** - Google docs with voice typing, Online platform, Zoom, how to use tablet, alternate technology

**Supporting early fine motor skills** - Handwriting, scissors, grasp other developmental skills

**Hands on support**-Teach parents, grandparents, etc how to do hands on support

**Work space set up**-Homework space set up/positioning

**Sensory regulation**-change in routines

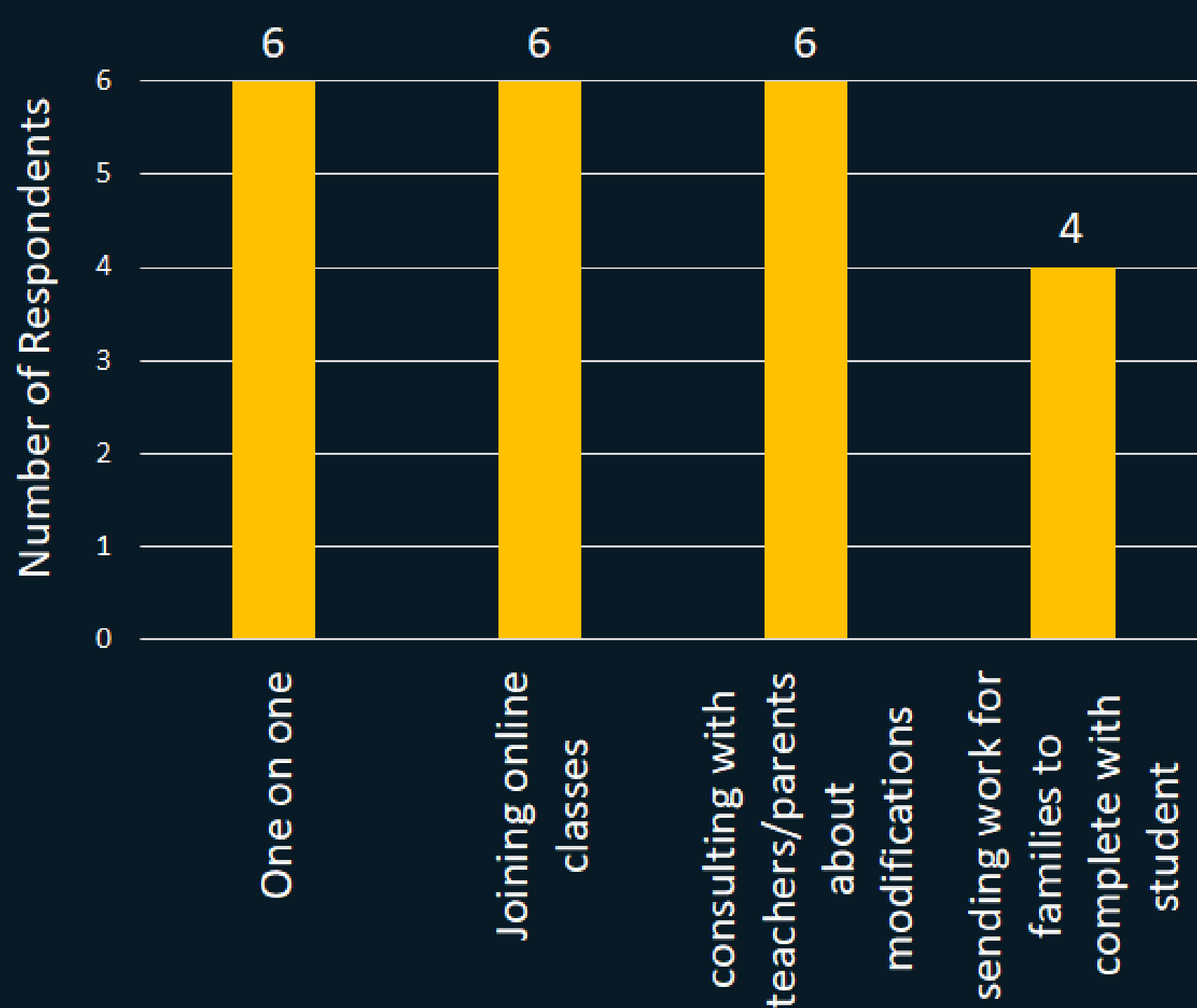
**Focus/attention**-working in new environment

**Homework modifications**



# Themes: Parent interactions

- Parent overwhelmed-speak to case manager
- New understanding and appreciation of OT
- Impact of remote learning on family
- Teaching parents to do hands on
- More feedback from parent than from teacher
- Home strategies and parent check ins
- Parent collaboration



# Intervention methods used in fall 2020

## Other options (write-ins):

"Research!! LOTS of research and making packets to drop off to families that don't have access to printers and don't have an address to receive mail as they are going from home to home."

"Increased collaboration with various ancillary providers"





# Future Directions



# OT role in transition

OT has a role in transitions as they have a role in promoting participation in occupations to positively impact health

To help students meet the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic including self-care, hygiene, masks and facial coverings, daily school and home routine, social distancing, **e-learning/technology management** and **telehealth in collaboration with parents**, and other professionals in school (Katsiana & Galanakis, 2021)



# Reflections

- IRB process
- Developing a survey that targets the information being explored
- Wording questions clearly
- Sharing the survey that complies with IRB
- The need for further research and supports in this area



# Dissemination

- NMOTA annual conference
- UNM OTGP
- Potentially NM public schools





# References

- Hayes, P. (2020). Students with special needs struggle to adjust to online learning model. *KOB4*. Retrieved March 5, 2021, from <https://www.kob.com/albuquerque-news/students-with-special-needs-struggle-to-adjust-to-online-learning-model/5898129/>
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