

What is Occupational Therapy?

School based occupational therapy providers are trained professionals that use purposeful, goal directed activities and task analysis to enable a child with a disability to benefit from their individualized education program (IEP). Federal law mandates that occupational therapy (OT) in the school system be educationally relevant. The focus of OT services in a school setting is to promote functional independence or participation within the educational environment. Educational OT services are those services developed by the Special Educational Team.

Who delivers services?

- Occupational Therapist
- Occupational Therapy Assistant

What is the difference between school based OT and Clinical OT:

What is the role of OT in the school?

School based occupational therapy is to identify whether a child is developing the necessary skills for participation in the education process. School based occupational therapy services are not about remediation, but rather focus on the student's ability to engage in education and access the curriculum. The delivery of occupational therapy services within the school setting is dependent on the impact of deficits on educational performance. If a student is found eligible for school based occupational therapy services the service delivery is not meant to be long-term, but provided in such a way that allows the student to meet his or her educational goals in the least restrictive environment.

School Based OT

Disability has to interfere with Access and Participation within the educational environment
Pre-Referral Form - completed by classroom teacher
Classified as a disability under IDEA
Services provided at no cost

Clinical Model

Remediation of disability
Diagnosis and prescription from MD needed for treatment
Third party insurance determines length/frequency
Fee for services

Areas of Assessment:

Sensorimotor, visual perception, visual motor integration, fine motor skills

Examples of tools based on concerns:

Peabody Developmental Motor Scales (PDMS-2)
Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency (BOT-2)
Miller Function and Participation Scales (MFUN)
Developmental Test of Visual Perception (DTVP-3)
Beery Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration (VMI-6)
Motor Free Test of Visual Perception (MVPT-3)
School Function Assessment (SFA)
Sensory Profile

- Toddler/Child Form
- School Companion
- Caregiver Questionnaire
- Adolescent Questionnaire

Sensory Processing Measure

- Main Classroom Form
- School Environment Forms
- Home Form

How is eligibility determined?

Individually based on functional performance within the areas of sensorimotor, visual perception, visual motor integration, fine motor skills and their ability to incorporate these skills for accessing curriculum and participating within the educational environment.

Areas of service delivery:

Self help skills

Sensorimotor Processing

Functional Fine Motor Skills

Visual Motor Integration Skills

Visual Perceptual Skills

Adaptive Equipment

Low Technology

How are services delivered?

Occupational therapy practitioners deliver services to students in a variety of ways. A critical piece of the therapy service is to provide consultation to, and collaborate with the student's education team to develop and implement strategies that enable the student to access and participate more successfully in the educational settings at all times, not just when the therapist is present.

According to best practices, students learn most effectively when services are provided within the framework of their educational program. Effort is made to provide support where the student needs are, whether it be the classroom, the cafeteria, the art room or in conjunction with another related service such as physical therapy or or speech and language therapy.

Does OT directly service handwriting?

Occupational therapy provides handwriting support for students identified with deficits in foundational skills such as; eye-hand coordination, in-hand manipulation skills, pencil control, hand strength, fine motor precision, visual motor integration, and visual perceptual skills.

What is the role of OT in self-regulation

To support the school psychologist and school adjustment counselors in developing sensory strategies within the school.

What are OT accommodations for the General Education Setting:

- Flexible seating options

- Prioritize the objective of the assignment and allow the student to demonstrate knowledge in alternative ways without penalty for fine motor or visual motor delays
- Adaptive equipment (pencil grips, slant boards, modified scissors)
- Opportunities for heavy work and movement
- Visual cues for organization (writing, checklists)
- Seating and cubby placement
- Access to computers, ipads for longer writing assignments

What is the exit criteria for OT services?

- The student's needs can be met by other educational professionals using either a consultation model or by making accommodations, no longer requiring the skilled services of a therapist.
- The IEP/504 team decides the student does not need additional goals requiring the skills of an occupational therapist to benefit from his/her educational program.