

Occupational & Physical Therapy

In essence, the goal of school based occupational and physical therapy can be defined as 3 part:

1. Supporting directly a student's access to educational activities and the school environment;
2. Collaborating with teachers and others to improve a student's participation and performance in curriculum-based activities identified by the teacher;
3. Educating teachers, family members, and others about the impacts of disability on educational performance, the potential benefits of adaptations or accommodations, and how to request support from related service professionals.



For additional information related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:

www.IDEA.gov

For additional information on the Exceptional Children's Education Act of Colorado:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/>



State of Colorado

Colorado
Department of Education

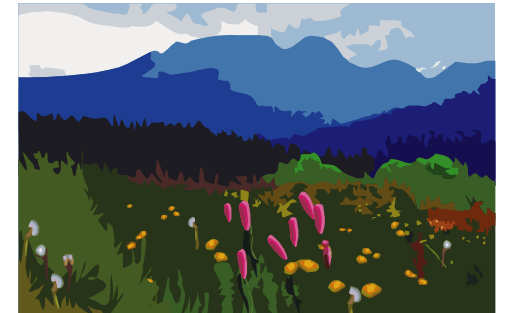
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Colorado School Based Occupational & Physical Therapy



School-Based OT and PT

What it's all
about...

Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and IDEA 2004

School based occupational therapy and physical therapy are related services to special education. Within public schools occupational and physical therapy are governed by federal and state special education law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, and Colorado's Exceptional Children's Education Act.

A student on an Individualized Education Plan is eligible to receive a related service, such as occupational or physical therapy if that student requires the related service in order to benefit from his/her special education programming (34 CFR § 300.34). Deciding whether a student may need occupational or physical therapy, in order to benefit from his/her special education programming, requires the consideration of multiple factors. The physical environment, need of the student, professional experience of the educators, specific programming currently in place are a few of the many context specific factors that determine whether a student requires a related service in order to benefit from his/her special education programming.

OT and PT Best Practices

The best therapists make themselves progressively unnecessary. They have modified the environment, procured appropriate equipment or tools, trained student and staff in activity follow through, and continuously monitor the effectiveness of the recommended educationally-relevant program.

Best practices of school-based OT and PT result in students within their classroom environment learning with their peers. The ultimate goal is meaningful participation in the least restrictive environment, as appropriate.

Student needs vary. OT and PT will vary depending upon a student's educational need. IDEA 2004, the federal law guiding OT and PT practice within public schools, requires that OT and PT practices support a student's benefit from their special education programming.

School Based OT and PT Services:

◆ Governed by state and federal laws;

- ◆ Related services to special education;
- ◆ Provision of services, as a related service, occurs only if the child requires such service in order to function in the educational setting as determined by a team, including the parent;
- ◆ Delivered in order to improve, develop, or restore functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation;
- ◆ Delivered in order to improve ability to perform tasks for independent function if functions are impaired or lost - which includes accommodating a disability;
- ◆ Delivered in order to prevent, through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function;
- ◆ School based therapies are intended to promote access to the educational environment and curriculum-based activities;
- ◆ School based therapies are intended to support access to special education programming. Refining or maximizing weak motor skills would not be addressed if a student is successfully accessing the special education environment and curriculum based activities.
- ◆ School based occupational and physical therapists are encouraged to conduct a context-based evaluation (ecological assessment). Of interest is a student's access to and participation in educationally relevant activities and environments.
- ◆ Ecological assessments emphasize function within the performance environment of the classroom and school;
 - ◇ Percentile scores on standardized assessments are of little value when unattached to functional performance data;
 - ◇ A student may perform poorly on a standardized motor assessment, yet, on account of appropriate accommodations that student may be functioning well within the classroom and school environment.
- ◆ School based physical and occupational therapies are intended to support a student's benefit from special education programming. At times, a child's presentation may require clinic or home health based interventions to satisfy the medical needs of a child. School based OT and PT services may not meet a child's total therapy needs.