

OT and PT in Public Education

Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy as part of an Individualized Education Program

How can teachers and other school staff know when to suspect that a child may need occupational therapy or physical therapy?

When a child has difficulty in school, teachers should identify the tasks and environments in which the child is not progressing or participating, try the educational accommodations or interventions that they think will support the child and monitor the child's response. If a child is suspected of having a disability, teachers may think about occupational therapy or physical therapy as related services to special education. The Reference Guides below will help teachers focus on areas that occupational therapy and physical therapy typically support.

Sample Reference Guide for Teachers: Occupational Therapy

1. What are the environments in which I frequently observe the child? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General classroom, large groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Small group or special classroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria or snack area | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recess or playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical education or sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts or technology education | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational settings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel or transitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Extracurriculars or co-curriculars |

2. In which of the environments listed above is the child unable or unwilling to participate in the tasks and activities expected of all students despite the accommodations or assistance provided?

3. Within the above environments, specify where the child needs additional or specialized strategies or accommodations to adequately participate in these general tasks or activities:

Activity

Environment

- Safety _____
- Maintaining or changing positions _____
- Maintaining cleanliness or hygiene _____
- Eating or drinking _____
- Traveling _____
- Managing clothing _____
- Using tools, materials, or toys _____
- Storing materials, setup, cleanup _____
- Beginning or completing tasks _____
- Recording information _____
- Moving in play or leisure activities _____
- Communicating _____
- Interacting in a positive way _____
- Regulating own behavior _____
- Following rules and adult direction _____
- Understanding or remembering _____

4. I tried these strategies for helping the child meet specific expectations:

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Expectation</i>
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5. I feel an occupational therapist could provide additional strategies to help the child meet these expectations in school:

(Adapted from AOTA, 1994; BCHCEB, 1993; W. J. Coster, 1996; and R. O. Smith, 1993.)

Sample Reference Guide for Teachers: Physical Therapy

1. What are the environments in which I frequently observe the child?
(Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General classroom, large groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Small group or special classroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria or snack area | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recess or playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical education or sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts or technology education | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational settings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel or transitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Extracurriculars or co-curriculars |

2. The child shows problems moving in the environments listed above, despite the accommodations or assistance I have provided:

3. Within the above environments, the child demonstrates difficulty with posture or movement in these activities.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Environment</i>
Walking	_____
Managing stairs, ramps, curbs, changes in terrain	_____
Maintaining a sitting or standing position	_____
Changing positions	_____
Keeping up with peers (tires easily, low endurance)	_____
Getting from one place to the next without getting lost	_____
Using playground or gym equipment	_____
Maneuvering a wheelchair	_____
Managing transfers	_____
Opening doors, lockers	_____
Toileting	_____
Other	_____

4. I tried these strategies help the child move safely:

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Expectation</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. I feel a physical therapist could provide additional strategies to help the child move more independently or safely in school:

Teachers should try the educational accommodations or interventions that they think will support the child and monitor the child's response.