



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ACADEMY OF PEDIATRIC PHYSICAL THERAPY

Through the visionary leadership of Bud DeHaven, the charter for the Section on Pediatrics (now the [Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy](#)) was officially recognized by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) House of Delegates in 1973. Since that time, the Academy membership and its leaders have remained committed to bringing together pediatric physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy students to promote professional growth, maintain a strong collegial network, and serve as strong advocates for children with special needs and their families. Here's how we work to fulfill our goal (and promise) to Advocate, Education, Elevate, and Lead in the profession of pediatric physical therapy.

ADVOCATE Through Legislative Support and Representation

The Academy actively monitors the rights of all children to receive a free and public education, including physical therapy service. From the development of public law 94-142 (1975), to threats of weakening IDEA (1997), to ongoing issues of federal funding, Academy members have tirelessly given their time and money (through dues and donations) to ensure that physical therapy remains an integral part of the educational environment. Over the years, many members have been active participants in federal and state legislative efforts that affect children, including working closely with APTA leadership to make sure pediatric legislative and reimbursement issues remain as a high priority.

The Academy's Pediatric Advocacy Liaisons (PALs) work with the state chapters to serve as in-state contacts and resources on pediatric issues on a more local level. And the Academy's involvement in the [International Organisation of Physical Therapists in Paediatrics](#) (IOPTP, a subgroup of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy) ensures that our voice is heard worldwide as well – every one of our members receives automatic membership in WCPT.

ELEVATE Through Opportunities in Practice and Research

The Academy has created several clinical practice guidelines (with more in the works) and a number of pediatric physical therapy fact sheets to support pediatric practice. The Academy also sponsors seven special interest groups focused on a variety of specialty areas, and created forums and social media opportunities for colleague-to-colleague discussion and networking. The Academy is also an active supporter of [APTA's Outcomes Registry](#), a platform that allows all physical therapists and practices to leverage EHR data to improve patient outcomes.

Academy members have taken an active role in addressing the vital need for research in the area of pediatric physical therapy. In 1982, the Academy's Research Committee was formed to promote pediatric research within the profession. Since the 1990s, we have hosted poster and platform presentation opportunities through our conferences and have made Academy grants available to members, including graduate students, to fund pediatric research. Since 1992, the Academy has provided more than \$1 million in Academy research grants.

In 1995, the Academy also initiated the endowed Pediatric Fund through the Foundation for Physical Therapy Research to support clinical research in pediatric physical therapy. This fund supports the concept of efficacy within all practice settings where pediatric therapists might assume a role. The Academy continues to actively support this and other research through the Foundation to ensure that pediatric research continues to be represented. Many outstanding researchers within our Academy have received research funding from the Foundation, NIH, and other grant sources that have recognized their outstanding contributions to the profession of pediatric physical therapy.

EDUCATE Through Professional Development

The Academy participated in the recognition of the advancement of the profession by spear-heading the development of the process for specialty certification in pediatrics through the [American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties](#). This required more than 10 years of volunteer work before the first pediatric therapists sat for the Pediatric Clinical Specialist (PCS) exam in 1986. Today, the Pediatric Specialty Council works with ABPTS to oversee the certification and recertification of pediatric therapists, with more than 2,000 PCS recognized, with Academy support through continuing education opportunities, study groups, and more.

The Academy has also worked with APTA to provide recognition opportunities for physical therapist assistants, including the PT Advanced Proficiency Pathway in Pediatrics. The Academy supports the creation and credentialing of pediatric residencies and fellowships by offering grants to the institutions, and works to ensure that pediatric content is included in PT and PTA programs throughout the country.

The Academy leads a track of educational programming at APTA's Combined Sections Meeting ([CSM](#)) and provides support and representation to APTA in all areas related to pediatric practice, as well as health and wellness issues in children. The Academy also offers specialized pediatric programming of their own, including the [Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy Annual Conference](#) (APPTAC), with almost 60 sessions on a variety of pediatric practice areas. Other Academy-sponsored courses include the [Advanced Clinical Practice in Pediatrics](#) course, the [Innovations in School-based Physical Therapy Practice](#) course, and the periodic STEP conferences (in collaboration with the Academy of Neurologic Physical Therapy). In addition to our in-person courses, the

Academy sponsors online courses through our partnerships with the [Core Learning Collective](#) and APTA's Learning Center.

Educational dissemination and communication with members first began with *The Totline*, the Academy's first newsletter. The Academy's current electronic newsletter, *Milestones*, shares pertinent and timely information with members every month. In 1988, the Academy also established their peer-reviewed, award-winning *Pediatric Physical Therapy* journal, which includes featured videos, podcasts, the Academy's clinical practice guidelines, and more.

LEAD Through Leadership Opportunities

Academy members have played significant roles in [APTA](#), the [Foundation for Physical Therapy Research](#), and in the [International Organisation of Physical Therapists in Paediatrics](#) (IOPTP, a subgroup of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy). Those roles have extended to include leadership in the Special Olympics and other organizations, state boards, and state departments of education. Members also have assumed consultant roles throughout the country in areas of health, wellness, and injury prevention, as well as physical therapy services to children with special needs. Our leaders have and continue to define the role of pediatric physical therapy professionals.

And the Academy is always looking for new leaders with a dedicated spirit and a will to improve pediatric physical therapy for the children and families that we serve! We have an active Student and New Professionals (SNP) group and a mentoring program to help you find your place.

Although the history of the Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy is rich with accomplishments, awards, and growth, the true history is held in the hearts of the membership. The vision of Bud DeHaven was that of an individual who loved the profession and saw his involvement in the profession as a joy and an honor – not as a responsibility. He saw involvement as a part of life, growth, learning, and evolution with friends and colleagues that would only be limited by the vision of the membership. The membership is what makes the Academy special, and the joy we all have in sharing our history comes from the common goals, friendship, and laughter when we come together for a common cause.

The history of the Academy will continue to evolve in depth and breadth, and we'd love for you to be a part of the journey!

Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy

Mission: Advance pediatric physical therapy through excellence in advocacy, education, and research.

Vision: Optimize movement for lifelong meaningful participation of all children.

Values: The Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy is committed to: Accountability, Collaboration, Consumer-centric care, Innovation, Professionalism, Social responsibility

Strategic Plan Goals: Advocate: Advocate for meaningful participation of all children; Educate: Enhance educational pathways to practice in pediatric physical therapy; Elevate: Elevate pediatric physical therapist practice through the application of evidence; Lead: Be a relevant, innovative, agile, and responsible organization.