



A BRIEF HISTORY OF APTA PEDIATRICS

Through the visionary leadership of Bud DeHaven, the charter for the Section on Pediatrics (now the [APTA Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy](#)) was officially recognized by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) House of Delegates in 1973. Since that time, APTA Pediatrics 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

APTA Pediatrics 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, APTA Pediatrics 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.

Our State Pediatric Advocacy Liaisons (SPALs) work with the state chapters to serve as in-state contacts and resources on pediatric issues on a more local level. And our involvement in the [International Organisation of Physical Therapists in Paediatrics](#) (IOPTP, a subgroup of [World Physiotherapy](#)) ensures that our voice is heard worldwide as well. Every one of our members receives automatic membership in World Physio.

ELEVATE Through Opportunities in Practice and Research

APTA Pediatrics has created several clinical practice guidelines (with more in the works), a number of pediatric physical therapy fact sheets to support pediatric practice, and a number of special interest groups (SIGs) focused on a variety of specialty areas. We also provide forums, social media, and face-to-face opportunities for colleague-to-colleague discussion and networking.

APTA Pediatrics members have taken an active role in addressing the vital need for research in the area of pediatric physical therapy. In 1982, our 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 APTA Pediatrics grants available to members, including graduate students, to fund pediatric research. Since 1992, APTA Pediatrics has provided more than \$1 million in member research grants.

In 1995, APTA Pediatrics also initiated the endowed Pediatric Fund through the [Foundation for Physical Therapy Research](#) (FPTR) 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. APTA Pediatrics continues to actively support this and other research through FPTR to ensure that pediatric research continues to be represented. Many outstanding researchers have received research funding from FPTR, the National Institutes of Health, and other grant sources that have recognized their outstanding contributions to the profession of pediatric physical therapy.

EDUCATE Through Professional Development

APTA Pediatrics participated in the recognition of the advancement of the profession by spear-heading 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 APTA Pediatrics providing support through continuing education opportunities, study groups, and more.

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

APTA Pediatrics 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. APTA Pediatrics also offers specialized pediatric programming of our own, including the [APTA Pediatrics Annual Conference](#), which provides almost 60 sessions in a variety of pediatric practice areas; 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, APTA Pediatrics provides online courses through our partnerships with [APTA's Learning Center](#), sponsored webinars, and more.

Educational dissemination and communication with members first began with *The Totline*, our newsletter. APTA Pediatrics' current electronic newsletter, *Milestones*, shares pertinent and timely information with members every month. In 1988, we also

established our peer-reviewed, award-winning *Pediatric Physical Therapy* journal, which includes featured videos, podcasts, our clinical practice guidelines, and more.

LEAD Through Leadership Opportunities

APTA Pediatrics members have played significant roles in [APTA](#), the [Foundation for Physical Therapy Research](#), and the [International Organisation of Physical Therapists in Paediatrics](#). 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.

APTA Pediatrics 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 APTA Pediatrics 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. Our membership is what makes APTA Pediatrics special, and the joy we all have in sharing our history comes from the common goals, friendship, and laughter we share when we come together for a common cause.

The history of APTA Pediatrics will continue to evolve in depth and breadth, and we would love for you to be a part of the journey!

APTA 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: APTA Pediatrics 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.