

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.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ General classroom, large groups | ☐ Small group or special classroom |
| ☐ Cafeteria or snack area | ☐ Bathroom |
| ☐ Recess or playground | ☐ Physical education or sports |
| ☐ Arts or technology education | ☐ Vocational settings |
| ☐ Travel or transitions | ☐ 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:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Environment</i>
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.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ General classroom, large groups | ☐ Small group or special classroom |
| ☐ Cafeteria or snack area | ☐ Bathroom |
| ☐ Recess or playground | ☐ Physical education or sports |
| ☐ Arts or technology education | ☐ Vocational settings |
| ☐ Travel or transitions | ☐ 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.