

What Is School Based Occupational and/or Physical Therapy?

- OT/PT is a federally mandated related service, identified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Once student goals are established in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), the IEP team decides whether OT/PT support is required for student success.
- OT/PT services could be provided anywhere in the school setting.
- OT/PT services may occur by working directly with the student, either individually, in a small group setting, or within the classroom.
- Other OT/PT services may be more indirect, or "on behalf of the student". These may include setting up strategies, modifications or accommodations within the student's environment.
- Consultation and/or collaboration with school staff and caregivers is another part of OT/PT school services.
- Areas addressed by OT may include: use of classroom tools and manipulatives, cutting, handwriting, assistive technology, self-help skills, organization, social skills, independent living skills, and sensory issues affecting education.
- Areas addressed by PT may include: independent living skills, safe school mobility both interior and exterior as applicable, access to equipment and supplies in educational environment. The goal of PT in the educational setting is to have the student be able to safely access their educational environment, with modifications provided as necessary.
- The OT/PT staff is also involved in Response to Intervention, the newest initiative that provides interventions to students.

Medical/clinical

- Services tend to be discipline based.
- Focus is on developmental milestones and components of movements.
- Few responsibilities are delegated except to the parents.
- Clients come to the clinics to see the therapist.

School-based

- Services are collaborative.
- Focus is on functional skills and adaptations that promote educational goals.
- More strategies and responsibilities are taught and delegated to teachers, aides, & others.
- The therapist may see the student anywhere in the school setting.