Occupational Therapy in the School System
Definition: Purpose for Students

1. Maximize occupational performance of students with special needs
2. Improve school performance skills — ability to learn
3. Meet goals (Individualized Education Program/Individualized Family Service Plan)
4. Diminish deficit(s)
5. Enhance strengths
6. Gain progress toward Independence
7. Remain anonymous — positive social acceptance
8. Allow for inclusive setting: Challenging
9. Eliminate interference of ability to gain instruction
10. Boost self-esteem, self-worth, confidence
11. Acquire skills for transition to future
Definition: Goals & Characteristics of Therapist

1. Make tx fun — tailor to students perception (games, devices, activities)
2. Teach manipulation (puzzles, books, scissors, pencils) for function
3. Allow for freedom by altering environment (write, organize, eat, mobility)
4. Show patience, maturity, creativity and tactfulness, while being fully present
5. Work well with others team members — generalize tx to other settings
6. Maintain record system to show progress
7. Benefit the student — productive life
8. Increase in number
   - 19% of OT’s work in schools
   - Opportunities for work in schools grow rapidly in 21st C.
Practice Sites

- Any place routine to child
- Any place causing difficulty
- Variety — Generalization — Independence

Examples

- Special needs classroom
- Integrated classroom
- Lunchroom
- Bathroom
- Playgrounds
- After school programs
- Daycare center
- Home
# Treatment Team

**Student Study Team** — those who contribute to the school setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Therapist</th>
<th>Educator</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapist</td>
<td>Principal/Administrator</td>
<td>Siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Therapist</td>
<td>School Nurse</td>
<td>Physician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Social Worker</td>
<td>Student Counselor</td>
<td>Daycare Provider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delineate concerns * Make recommendations * Create work plan * Assess child’s progress * Alter plan as needed * Achieve goals * Give support * Achieve the Best
Effective Treatment Team

Lilyan’s preschool classroom

Individual therapy
- Practice buttoning sweater
- Draw broad chalk lines, imitating her vertical/horizontal strokes

Entire class — motor group activities
- Jointly planned by OT, PT, ST
- Farm animal unit
- ST: sing “Old MacDonald”
- PT: Obstacle course (gallop, push bail of hay, crawl, roll)
- OT: Milk the cardboard cow with rubber glove utters filled with milk

End of Day — meet with teachers and therapists to discuss progress, make recommendations, complete documentation
Diagnoses: What to Treat

Skill issues that interfere with a child’s educational performance

Generally
Gross/Fine Motor Deficits
Physically Disabled
Developmental Delays
Visual-motor Integration
Visual-perceptual Skills
Emotionally Disabled
Mentally Disabled
Learning Disabled
Attention Deficits
Sensory Awareness Processing
At Risk to develop problems

Specifically
Feeding self
Holding crayon
Completing a written assignment
Managing wheelchair/assistive device
Walking independent
Completing a one piece puzzle
Watching educational video segment
Completing learning assessment
Ability to touch certain items such as glue

“Early intervention is important to minimize the secondary behavioral, emotional, physical and psychiatric problems that can result from students experiencing challenges with their daily occupations.”
### Diagnoses: Areas of Treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Non-Academic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Behavior Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation of tools</td>
<td>Self-Help/Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Social Skills/Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevocational/vocational participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Federal law requires OT be available to students up to age 21, but the majority of occupational therapists employed in schools work with elementary age children.

More intensive occupational therapy services are necessary during times in which child is acquiring new skills; this is a time in which critical learning and generalization skills are present. (i.e. first few years of life; transition to new program, new school or community job site.)
**Diagnoses: Specific Condition**

- Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)
- Affects 6% of population
- Lack motor coordination to perform daily self-care and productive and/or leisure tasks
- Experience frequent failure and low self-confidence
- Hinders social, academic, and physical performance
- Coexists with learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorder

- “Top-down” approach effective in improving functional performance of children with DCD
- Cognitive Orientation to Daily Occupational Performance (CO-OP) assists with skill acquisition and generalization/transfer of skills
Diagnoses: Additional Roles of OT

- Develop curriculums and programs
- Address school health and safety
- Identify assessment accommodations and modifications
- Develop violence prevention programs
- Various others; well-roundedness
**Current Practice Issues and Trends**

**Expressing Knowledge**

**Verbal and Non-verbal Communication**
- Personal space
- Questions expresses, and directions
- Social skills
- Gestures and expressions
- Communication

**Graphic Communications**
- Tools
- Writes
- Computer
- Tests

**Self-Care and Functional Mobility**

**Self Care Activities**
- Personal hygiene
- Toilet
- Feeds self
- Personal devices
- Independence
- Cooks & Cleans
- Budgets
- Community and personal needs

**Functional Mobility**
- Moves and transfers
- Walks
- Stairs
- Playground and equipment
- Transportation

(Swinth, Chandler, Hanft, Jackson, & Shepherd)
Current Practice Issues and Trends

Learning Academics
- Development
- Adaptation
- Modalities
- Environment

Community Integration and Work
- Information
- Participation
- Job requirements
- Manage time and work
- Equipment

Student Role
- Completes, manages, organizes
- Adheres and attends
- Participates in groups
- Develops and organizes
- Classroom and school
- Transitions
- Respect
- Socialization
- Participates in school
- Manages and uses

(Swinth, Chandler, Hanft, Jackson, & Shepherd)
Treatment Goals

Using goal directed activities in school to improve the students learning and developmental abilities. These include individual functions, performance skills, patterns and contextual/activity demands.

Goal directed activities vary between each individual student

- Physical
- Sensory
- Neurological
- Emotional
- Mental function and challenges

(Swinth, Chandler, Hanft, Jackson, & Shepherd)
Models of Service Delivery

Direct

- On or off site
- Individually selected → therapist
- “Hands-on”

Integrated or Supervised

- Intervention → therapist
- On site

Consultation

- Recommendation → therapist
- Provided to teachers, aids, or service providers

(Swinth, Chandler, Hanft, Jackson, & Shepherd)
Models of Service Delivery

Practice Models

- Developmental
- Sensory integration
- Neurodevelopment
- Biomechanical
- Motor control
- Coping
- Occupational adaptation
- Behavioral
- Cognition

Approaches

- Establish/restore
  - guide movement and postural adjustments
- Alter/modify
  - analyze environment
- Adapt
  - special equipment
- Prevent
  - teach and wait
- Create
  - Design
Changing Patterns of Care

Evolution of Occupational therapy

1970’s: Start of movement

1975: Education of the Handicapped Act

1980-90’s: Focus on quality of life

Today: Focus on occupation and performance skills
Ethical Issues

Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics

Principle 1

Principle 2

Principle 3

HIPAA: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
References


