

## • Occupational Therapy (OT)

---

School Based occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are key contributors within the education team. They support a student's ability to participate in desired daily school activities or "occupations." They focus on the students' strengths, and can design and implement programming to improve inclusion and accessibility, such as Universal Design for Learning.. They collaborate within the education team to support student success. In this way, occupational therapy practitioners can contribute within both general and special education. Occupational therapy practitioners have specific knowledge and expertise to increase participation in school routines throughout the day. Interventions include:

- Conducting activity and environmental analysis and making recommendations to improve the fit for greater access, progress, and participation
- Reducing barriers that limit student participation within the school environment
- Providing assistive technology to support student success
- Supporting the needs of students with significant challenges, such as by helping to determine methods for alternate educational assessment and learning
- Helping to plan relevant instructional activities for ongoing implementation in the classroom
- Preparing students for successfully transitioning into appropriate post-high school employment, independent living, and/or further education

Occupational therapy services for students with special needs are determined through the IEP process. School-based occupational therapy is available for students who are eligible for special education. Occupational therapists complete evaluations and assessments, and work with other members of the school-based team to help determine what is needed for a student to receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. They collaborate with the team to identify a student's annual goals and determine the services, supports, modifications, and accommodations that are required for the student to achieve them, including addressing transition needs no later than 16 years of age. When the IEP team determines that occupational therapy is needed in order for a student to meet his or her annual goals, then occupational therapy should be included in the student's IEP. In some instances, students whose disability affects their participation in school but who do not qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), may be eligible to receive occupational therapy under other federal laws such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.