

## WHAT IS SCHOOL-BASED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

School-based occupational therapists (OTs) support a student's participation and achievement in school roles or "occupations".

OTs support skills for positive behaviors, independence with self-management, academic achievement, and participation in school. This support can occur within both the regular and special education settings.

OT's role is to empower students and staff through skills and resources.

## WHAT IS A RELATED SERVICE?

School-based OT is considered a related service in special education. Related services "assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education." Once an area of eligibility is determined, OT can be a part of the special education services.

## THE REFERRAL AND IEP PROCESS

How do educational teams determine if a student needs school-based OT services through special education programming?

- The student's challenges (see front) are shared with the school psychologist.
- Classroom interventions are considered and implemented, and/or a special education referral is initiated.
- A comprehensive special education evaluation, including OT, is completed.
- The special education evaluation results are shared with the parents/guardians during a scheduled meeting where eligibility for special education services is determined.
- If eligible, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is written to include student needs, goals, and accommodations that are necessary to facilitate the student's achievement within their educational program.
- The IEP team determines if related services are needed to meet the student needs and program goals.

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## School-Based Occupational Therapy

<https://www.lacrosseschools.org/>

## WHAT DO OT SERVICES LOOK LIKE?

Where do services take place?

- General education setting (classroom, lunchroom, playground, art room, etc.)
- Special education setting
- Focused on providing services in the least restrictive environment

### Types of Services

- Directly working with students
- Indirectly working to develop programs and modify classwork or the environment
- Working with staff through consultation and co-planning
- Supporting Universal Design for Learning (UDL), collaborative problem solving and training at schools to benefit all students

## SPECIFIC AREAS THAT OTs ADDRESS

- Activities of daily living (self cares such as feeding, dressing, bathroom skills)
- Self-regulation for engagement in learning and play
- Executive functioning (planning, organization, and monitoring during daily tasks)
- Academic skills -support learning and communication through sensory integration, sensory-motor skill development, and adaptations
- Providing adaptations for accessibility and engagement across school environments
- Energy conservation and work simplification strategies
- Building students' engagement and productivity
- Assistive Technology and adaptive equipment
- Parent, staff, and student education
- Enrichment to support all students' academic success

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF OT SERVICES?

- Promote social, academic, and functional participation within the school setting
- Increase mastery of OT-related skills
- Foster classroom supports through consultation and collaboration with school staff
- Build the student's self-awareness and self-advocacy for success within the classroom
- Promote participation through success and relevance within their roles at school

### Reference:

*Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy: A Resource Planning Guide* (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2011)