

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)