

KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

Excellence for Every Child

School Based Occupational & Physical Therapy

For additional information related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>

School Based Occupational & Physical Therapy Services

- ◆ **Governed by state and federal laws;**
- ◆ Related services to special education;
- ◆ Provision of services, as a related service, occurs only if the child requires such service in order to function in the educational setting as determined by a team, including the parent;
- ◆ Delivered in order to improve, develop, or restore functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation.
- ◆ Delivered in order to improve ability to perform tasks for independent function if functions are impaired or lost, which includes accommodating a disability.
- ◆ Delivered in order to prevent, through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function;
- ◆ School based therapies are intended to promote access to the educational environment and curriculum-based activities.
- ◆ School based therapies are intended to support access to special education programming. Refining or maximizing weak motor skills would not be addressed if a student is successfully accessing the special education environment and curriculum based activities.

- ◆ School based occupational and physical therapists are encouraged to conduct a context-based evaluation (ecological assessment). Of interest is a student's access to and participation in educationally relevant activities and environments.
- ◆ Ecological assessments emphasize function within the performance environment of the classroom and school.
- ◇ Percentile scores on standardized assessments are of little value when unattached to functional performance data.
- ◇ A student may perform poorly on a standardized motor assessment, yet, on account of appropriate accommodations that student may be functioning well within the classroom and school environment.
- ◆ School based physical and occupational therapies are intended to support a student's benefit from special education programming. A child's presentation may require clinic or home health based interventions to satisfy the medical needs of a child. School based OT and PT services may not meet a child's total therapy needs.

School Based OT and PT Services: OT and PT Best Practices

The best therapists make themselves progressively unnecessary. They have modified the environment, provided appropriate equipment or tools, trained student and staff in activity follow through, and continuously monitor the effectiveness of the recommended educationally-relevant program.

Best practices of school-based OT and PT result in students within their classroom environment learning with their peers. The ultimate goal is meaningful participation in the least restrictive environment as appropriate.

Student needs vary. OT and PT will vary depending upon a students' educational need. IDEA 2004, the federal law guiding OT and PT practice within public schools, requires that OT and PT practices support a students' benefit from their special education programming.

