

## Occupational and Physical Therapy in the Eau Claire Area School District

### What is it?

Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) are two of the related services available for special education students. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) team determines which services a student needs. School-based therapy supports skills that take place in the school environment related to education. OT/PTs work with teachers and staff to help students with disabilities benefit from special education.

### Why do we have it?

For times when the student's unique abilities need resources and expertise beyond those provided in a special education program.

### When might a special education student receive OT/PT services?

The IEP team decides if additional support of occupational or physical therapy is needed to enhance participation in school and achieve IEP goals.

### Where does therapy occur?

Therapy takes place across the whole school environment. This can include the resource room, school grounds, bus, halls, playground, classrooms, lunchroom, restrooms, etc.

Other educational settings may include a student's home, daycare or 4-year old kindergarten. Consultation may also be provided at school-affiliated work sites and for community field trip outings.

### How does Occupational Therapy contribute toward achievement of educational goals?

Through purposeful and meaningful activities OT helps students to improve their level of functional independence and participation in their educational environment. OT supports access to a student's educational program in the areas of fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, self-help skills, and play skills with toys and peers. Some examples include: handwriting, keyboarding, cutting, eating skills, dressing skills, and motor skills to prepare students for future employment.

### How does Physical Therapy contribute toward achievement of educational goals?

PT focuses on a child's ability to move as independently as possible in the school setting. The school PT evaluates the child's ability to move throughout the school and participate in classroom activities. Some examples include: wheelchair mobility, walking with assistive devices, stair skills, playground skills/safety, and bus independence and safety.

## What are the differences between school-based and medical-based therapy?

	<i>School-Based</i>	<i>Medical-Based</i>
<b>WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THERAPY?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Therapy addresses access and modifications to special education and the school environment</i></li> <li>• <i>Works toward independence and participation in the school</i></li> <li>• <i>Intervention for needs that significantly interfere with education</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Therapy addresses medical conditions and impairments</i></li> <li>• <i>Works on individual's needs based on medical information</i></li> <li>• <i>Intervention usually for a change in ability or short-term condition</i></li> </ul>
<b>HOW ARE THERAPY GOALS ESTABLISHED?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>IEP team jointly sets goals based on student's strengths, interests, and needs.</i></li> <li>• <i>IEP goals needing OT or PT guidance are addressed throughout educational program</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Medical team jointly sets goals based on diagnosis and prognosis.</i></li> <li>• <i>Therapy goals are based on outcomes specific to the individual's living situation.</i></li> </ul>
<b>HOW MUCH THERAPY IS PROVIDED?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Varies based on child's school and programming</i></li> <li>• <i>Ranges from intermittent consultation to weekly direct service.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Varies based on medical goals and often must consider insurance parameters.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ranges depending on progress and goal acquisition.</i></li> </ul>

## Can a child receive both medical and school-based therapy?

Yes, but the goals must be different for each setting. Communication between therapists is in the child and family's best interest.

***Our hope is that this information is helpful as you work together with school and medical teams throughout your child's developing years.***

Developed by Eau Claire Area School District Occupational and Physical Therapists 9-30-15

Based on information from:

[http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped\\_phy\\_ther](http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_phy_ther)

[http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped\\_occ\\_ther](http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_occ_ther)

<http://www.ecasd.us/District/Departments/Teaching-and-Learning/Student-Services-Special-Education/Special-Education/Occupational-and-Physical-Therapies>