

What is Occupational Therapy (OT)

Occupation by definition is anything and everything that occupies one's time. A student's daily occupations include things such as eating, getting dressed, playing, sleeping, reading, writing, etc.

Occupational therapy is a wholistic look at an individual's ability to perform one's occupations in his/her world. If an individual is unable to function in certain areas of life, the OT makes changes to any or all facets to allow the individual to succeed with the greatest level of independence possible.

OT in the Classroom

A school based OT can assist the teacher and/or student with the following:

1. Motor Skills
 - Assessment of fine and gross motor skill (i.e.) writing, scissor skills, coordination, balance.
 - Provide intervention strategies and program development to improve performance in these areas
 - Provide equipment suggestions/environmental modifications to increase success in same

2. Sensory Integration
 - Assess the student's ability to manage his/her sensory systems (i.e.) how does the student respond to sounds, touch, etc.
 - Assessment of the classroom sensory environment
 - Recommendations of classroom modifications/equipment strategies to improve individual students' and overall classroom sensory integration.

3. Environmental Modification/Equipment Prescription
 - Assessing the school's physical environment to increase overall accessibility
 - Making equipment recommendations to increase an individual student's performance independence

Examples of Common Classroom Referrals

- A student is unable to participate in classroom activities secondary to physical inability/physical barriers.

- A student exhibits repetitious behaviours, avoidance/aversion to certain stimuli, seeking certain stimuli.

- A student is having difficulty completing assigned class work secondary to inefficient method or premature fatigue.

- A student is developmentally behind classroom norm in one or more areas.