



A team approach.

What is Occupational Therapy?

An occupational therapist treats children who have motor development or sensory processing difficulties. Observable characteristics include: an over or underabundance of movement, over or underresponsiveness to being moved, inappropriate responses to touch, hesitancy to try new motor tasks (i.e. roller skates, bike riding), and difficulty with visual perception.

The nervous system, which regulates the body's senses and motor actions exhibits plasticity, which means it *can* be changed. The brain may be unable to send clear messages to the muscles in order to direct a desired movement, such as jumping or cutting with scissors. Or, the muscles themselves may be unable to perform the task due to weakness or low tone. The OT helps the brain and body learn to develop more normally by directing sensory input, providing the controlled input as needed, so that the motor output facilitates age-appropriate motor skills. The OT also helps the child to develop adaptive responses to his environment.

School-age children requiring OT may have difficulty attending or sitting still, keeping up with writing skills in class, or participating in sports activities. These children are given strategies to help them immediately compensate for weak areas, while intervention simultaneously works on the underlying skills causing the difficulty.