

School-Based Occupational Therapy

Definition by Federal Law IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving, developing, or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation • Improving ability to perform tasks for independent functioning if functions are impaired or lost
Who can get school based OT services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OT is a related service, not a stand-alone service. • Student must be identified as having a disability that interferes with education under the criteria of IDEA. • OT is not based on specific test scores or discrepancies, but rather on whether the unique expertise of the therapist is required for the student’s educational participation. • Medical diagnosis itself does not determine eligibility under IDEA. • The disability must “adversely affect the child's educational performance” (Part B).
What does school based occupational therapy work on?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine motor deficits that impact academics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Fine motor dexterity (cutting, manipulatives, etc.) ◦ Posture or seating if physical therapy is not involved ◦ Imitating motor movements (circle time, fingerplays) ◦ Bilateral coordination (using two hands to do two different things) • Visual perceptual deficits that impact academics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Handwriting (fundamental motor skills related to handwriting – after formal instruction) ◦ Letter formation ◦ Sizing ◦ Spacing ◦ Typing ◦ Visual sequencing (puzzles, etc.) ◦ Figure ground (finding items in a competing background) • Sensory-based behaviors that impact academics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Oversensitivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student squints, covers ears, refuses messy play ◦ Overstimulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Shuts down” when the environment is too noisy or busy ◦ Seeking movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting up out of seat frequently, frenetic movement ◦ Seeking pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting on feet, touching others excessively, crashing into things.
What is <u>NOT</u> is an OT’s realm of practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Capitalization and punctuation ◦ Grammar ◦ Content • Attention seeking or escape behaviors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Behaviors that can be remediated with a positive behavior plan, sticker chart, etc. • Students may have a diagnosed disability that impacts their motor skills BUT if it is not impacting their ability to participate in the educational program, then school-based related services are not indicated.