

If your child is eligible for special education, you or any member of the school team may request an evaluation. It should be requested when IEP goals/objectives cannot be met or addressed appropriately by the special educator, classroom teacher or core school faculty/staff without the support of a therapist.

Results of the evaluation and recommendations will be shared with the IEP team which will then determine if your child needs school-based therapy to benefit from special education.

#### **How does the IEP Team decide if therapy is needed?**

The team discusses the student's educational goals and desired outcomes and then determines if any related services are explicitly necessary for the student to progress toward these goals.

#### **How can consultative therapy services be beneficial for my child in school?**

Consultative occupational and physical therapy services support inclusion and provide the least restrictive environment for educating your child.

Consultative therapy services enhance the knowledge base of all members of the team so that more members are positively influencing your child's educational outcome.

#### **Does my child need a doctor's prescription before he/she can receive physical therapy?**

Yes, all exceptional student education students referred to physical therapy must have a current Florida prescription. Once a student is staffed into physical therapy, a new prescription for physical therapy must be obtained when there is a medical change.



**Learning Knows No Bounds**

# Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy Programs

*Is school-based therapy all that your child REALLY needs?*



***St. Johns County School District  
Exceptional Student Education***

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The services of an occupational and a physical therapist are available to exceptional students who need specialized assistance in developing fine and gross motor skills to assist them in achieving specific objectives within the classroom setting. The service must be clearly necessary for the child to have access to an appropriate education to experience educational benefits and are not intended to be rehabilitative.

**The occupational therapist** may evaluate students currently eligible for exceptional education services to determine if the development of fine motor skills would help the student achieve his or her educational goals.

**The physical therapist** works under a physician's orders to improve motor development to help the student achieve educational goals. Prior to receiving services for physical therapy, parents will be asked to obtain a prescription from the child's physician and provide it to the therapist, or assistance principal at their child's school.

#### **Therapy Services**

Consultative and/or direct therapy services may be provided depending on each student's disability and the amount of time the student is participating in other special programs.

#### **What is the difference between school-based therapy and private therapy?**

School-based physical and occupational therapies are related support services covered under IDEA 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

IDEA is the federal legislation that determines rules and regulations for services to students with disabilities in public schools. A student receiving therapy services outside of school may or may not qualify for the same services (type and frequency) in school. School-based occupational and physical therapy as described by IDEA must be educationally relevant. Educational relevance means that the service must be needed to allow the student to benefit from the educational setting. The focus in the school environment is function, not medical diagnosis.

Private therapy encompasses therapy provided in a rehabilitation center, private clinic, or by a home health care company. Their focus is your child's medical diagnosis and the rehabilitation of your child. Therapy may include: post surgical therapy, treatment of disabilities that are acute or chronic in nature, etc.

#### **How can school-based physical and occupational therapy help my child?**

School therapy is designed to enhance students' ability to be successful in the educational environment. The physical and occupational therapist may assist by developing and/or providing interventions for students as well as training the team members working with him or her. The team could include the student, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, dietary service providers, etc.

School system physical and occupational therapy services may address:

- functional fine and gross motor skills for performing class activities
- functional mobility around the school
- need for assistive and adaptive learning devices to perform school tasks
- transfer and positioning techniques or equipment needs
- modifications of the educational setting
- training for team members to assist with follow through activities

#### **What are the reasons for discontinuing therapy from my child's program? If he/she is dismissed, can he/she ever receive therapy services again?**

Discontinuance of therapy will be discussed when:

- Therapy is no longer needed to help your child meet educational goals.
- Your child's curriculum with modifications and accommodations will meet IEP (Individual Education Plan) goals without therapy intervention.
- The IEP team determines when therapies may be added (with a reevaluation) and discontinued at different times as the need arises.

#### **How do I request an occupational or physical therapy evaluation for my child?**

Your child must be eligible for special education before being considered for related services covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).