

Let's Talk About...

Occupational Therapy (OT): Helping your child heal

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy — also called OT [oh-tee] — can help your child with activities (occupations) that give life meaning. For example, OT can help your child learn how to:

- Brush their teeth
- Get dressed
- Use a computer
- Manage school activities
- Create art
- Play games.

(See a list of occupations on page 2.)

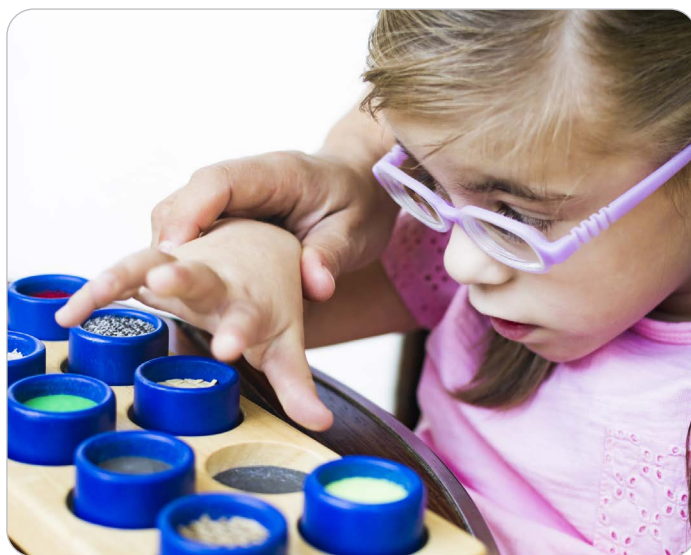
Occupational therapy can take place in a school, hospital, clinic, or home. It must be recommended by a doctor.

Why does my child need OT?

OT may be recommended if your child has a health issue that makes it hard to learn these activities on their own. Examples of some health issue include a physical or learning problem caused by a disease, injury, or birth defect.

How is OT different from other therapies?

Physical therapy and mental or behavioral health therapy help your child with issues such as building strength and range of motion, large muscle movement, as well as managing grief, pain, anger, and frustration. OT is focused on helping them do important activities.



What happens during OT?

An Occupational Therapist will test your child's skills and make a treatment plan. The plan will detail what kind of therapy is needed and how often it should be done. A set of therapy sessions are called an **episode of care**.

Parents or family caregivers will need to join their child at each therapy session. Your child's therapist will give you tasks to practice with your child at home. Families take a break after each episode of care but can come back to work on new goals.

Who pays for OT?

Each insurance plan is different. You will need to talk with your insurance provider to find out if OT is covered by your plan, how many sessions are covered, and what is your portion of the cost. Be sure to check with your insurance provider before your child's first therapy session.

Occupation areas	Occupations
Activities of daily living (ADLs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brushing teeth • Dressing • Using the toilet • Bathing • Brushing and washing hair • Managing haircuts • Trimming nails • Cooking • Caring for other people • Caring for pets and animals • Driving and getting around the community (does not include driver education classes) • Religious or spiritual expression
<p>Health</p> <p>Rest and sleep</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Work</p> <p>Play</p> <p>Leisure (recreation or relaxation)</p> <p>Social skills (Some places are better for building social skills. For example, OT at school may be better than OT at a clinic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing medications • Physical activity • Using personal care devices, such as glasses, contact lenses, orthotics or others • Preparing for sleep • Staying asleep • Participating in school-related activities, such as sitting at a desk • Identifying interests • Finding work • Developing work skills • Volunteering • Identifying activities • Exploring ideas • Participating in play, including using toys • Balance play and other activities • Exploring options • Balancing leisure and other activities • Planning and participating in leisure activities • Participating in the community • Appropriate social interactions • Understanding social cues

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