

# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

“Occupations” are the meaningful activities and routines that a person does as part of everyday life at home, school/work and in the community. When a child has difficulty doing activities that peers are doing, an occupational therapist can evaluate the child’s abilities and identify strategies to improve his/her skills.

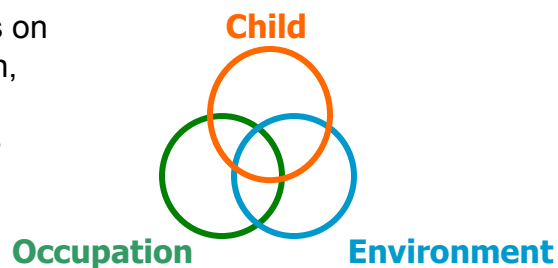


Here at the Center for Development and Learning our clients are primarily school-aged children. The information on this website is geared towards supporting children’s abilities to participate and perform typical childhood occupations, which is sometimes difficult for children who have unique abilities in developmental, sensory processing, motor coordination, behavioral or other areas.



## What are typical childhood occupations?

**Occupational Therapy** focuses on supporting a child’s ability to participate in, and perform, occupations by balancing the abilities of the *child* with the demands of the *occupation* and the influences of the *environment* in which the activity is done. The occupational therapist considers this dynamic balance when developing strategies to support and improve the child’s abilities in an occupation.



## Who should contact an occupational therapist?

Seek professional input from an occupational therapist if your child has difficulty participating in, or doing, meaningful activities and routines that you feel he/she is developmentally ready to do – or if your child has a known disability that is interfering with his/her ability to perform childhood occupations.

## Occupational Therapy: Assessment

During the assessment process, the occupational therapist collaborates with the child, parents, and others to identify the main occupations in which the child is having difficulty. Occupational therapists analyze how the child's neurodevelopmental, sensory, perceptual, motor, social, and cognitive skills influence his or her behavior and abilities when performing occupations, or meaningful activities and routines.

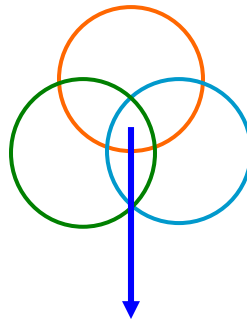
A child's successful participation and performance of a specific occupation is a balance of the abilities of the **child**, the demands of the **occupation** and the **environment** in which the activity is done. The occupational therapist considers this dynamic balance when developing strategies to support and improve the child's participation and performance in the occupation.

*For example, consider the "occupation" of completing a school art project:*



The **Child's** personal skills and factors =  
hand dexterity, attention, motivation, visual perceptual skills,  
ability to follow directions, motor skills, etc.

Demands of the **Occupation** =  
size of materials, complexity,  
scissor style, paper type, gluing  
method, other materials, etc.



Factors in the **Environment** =  
noises, room size, lighting,  
table height, seat location,  
odors, proximity of peers, etc.

***A good child / environment / occupation balance =  
successful participation and performance in the occupation***

When the child's abilities, the demands of the occupation, and the environmental factors are well balanced, the child wants to do the art project, attends to the teacher and the task, understands the directions, and can cut, draw and glue – Ta da! A masterpiece!

An occupational therapist provides recommendations for individualized strategies to help promote success in the child's performance by [developing the child's skills](#), [adapting the occupation](#), or [modifying the environment](#). (Click on underlined words to link to see examples.)



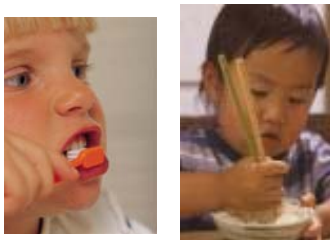






# Typical Childhood Occupations

**Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)** – self care activities, such as eating, dressing, bathing, oral care, hygiene, grooming, toileting, etc.



**Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)** – activities that take place in broader home and community environments, such as helping with meals, using money, laundry, community mobility, cleaning, shopping, pet care, telephone use, etc.



**Education/Work** – participating in learning environments in academic or extracurricular activities, pre-vocational and vocational activities, etc.



**Play/Leisure** – independent and shared activities that provide enjoyment or entertainment, such as creative play, toys and games, sports, enjoying music, bike riding, fishing, reading, collecting, environmental activities, etc.



**Social Participation** – activities associated with interacting others, participating in a group, attending community events, enjoying friends, etc.

