

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The Role of the School Based Occupational Therapist:

The focus of the school-based Occupational Therapist (OT) is meant to enhance a student's ability to function in an educational program. Outcomes are related to the primary occupation areas of education, activities of daily living (self-care), play/leisure, the student's participation within the school environment, the fine motor abilities, self-regulation of the student, and social participation.

The school-based OT serves as a member of a variety of interprofessional school teams that make decisions regarding evaluation, eligibility, and services. In Virginia, Occupational Therapy can only be a related service. A student must first be found eligible with an educational disability before the IEP team can consider the related service of Occupational Therapy. Students receive occupational therapy as a related service if included in the student's IEP.

Once eligible for occupational therapy, the location, frequency, and type of services are provided based on individual student needs and are determined by the IEP team. A continuum of service delivery options may be considered which include direct and/or consultative intervention. Occupational Therapy services may be provided in the general education and/or special education setting. Occupational therapy services are dynamic and change as the student's needs change.

School-based OTs provide services to students with a variety of disabilities across all grade levels. They collaborate with other members of the student's team on effective interventions and strategies so they may be integrated with educational activities in order to assist a student in accessing his or her curriculum.

Licensure Requirements:

In Loudoun County Public Schools, Occupational Therapy services are an itinerant program in which Occupational Therapists travel among schools to in order to provide the required services. All OTs hold a Master's degree from an American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) or the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) certified school. They are required to hold a valid and current license issued by the Occupational Therapy Advisory Board (under the Board of Medicine) from the Department of Health Professions.

Resources:

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)

<http://www.aota.org/>

Virginia Department of Education – Occupational Therapy Services

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/iep_instruct_svcs/related_services/handbook_occupational_physical_therapy.pdf

