

Which children would benefit from Occupational Therapy?

The early years of a child's development are very important! Early detection of any possible challenges a child may face is vital to maintaining a child's confidence, self-esteem, and enjoyment for learning. Child development research has established that the rate of human learning and development is most rapid during the preschool years. Timing of intervention becomes especially important when a child runs the risk of missing an opportunity to learn during a maximum state of readiness. If most teachable moments or stages of greatest readiness are not taken advantage of, a child may have difficulties learning a particular skill at a later time. *Early Intervention leads a child to develop to their full potential!*

***If a child is having difficulty with 3 or more criteria listed below, an Occupational Therapy evaluation is suggested. ***

Fine Motor Skills / Bilateral Coordination Skills / Visual Motor Integration Skills:

- Poor coordination for fine motor tasks, such as cutting, holding a marker or pencil, manipulating fasteners, opening and closing containers, stringing beads, etc.
- Was slow to develop hand preference or is not clearly right or left handed.
- Difficulties imitating age appropriate shapes and letters, difficulties coloring or tracing within the lines, poor handwriting, difficulties finishing writing assignments in a timely manner.
- Unable to throw or catch a ball.
- Have difficulties learning motor skills for a new activity or game.
- Grasp objects too loose or too tightly.
- Have an awkward grip on writing utensils.

Gross Motor Skills / Ocular Motility Skills / Motor Planning and Praxis Skills:

- Unable to stand on one foot with eyes open, eyes closed.
- Unable to kick a moving or stationary ball.
- Unable to toss a ball or beanbag at a target 5 feet away, unable to catch a tossed ball.
- Unable to manipulate stairs, or climb on/off playground equipment without assistance to plan the correct movements.
- Difficulties learning new motor movements.
- Challenged with imitating block designs or completing puzzles.
- Unable to visually follow an object or line of print smoothly with eyes or loses place frequently when reading or copying from desk or board in classroom.
- Appears clumsy and accident prone, frequently falling and tripping? Appear to have poor balance.
- Appears stiff and rigid, or loose and floppy.

Self-Care Skills:

- Difficulties with any aspect of age appropriate dressing including: manipulation of buttons, zippers, or snaps, tying shoes, putting socks, shoes, pants, shirt or jacket on.
- Unable to eat using utensils, including fork, spoon, and knife, dropping or spilling things frequently.
- Unable to drink from an open cup or straw.
- Appears overly messy when eating compared to other children their age.

Sensory Processing Skills:

- Have poor endurance for standing or seated positions, props self on the desk, head in hands, or slumps frequently.
- Has a short attention span or frequently requires movement activities to maintain attention.
- Seems sensitive to movement, avoids swings and slides, gets dizzy or nauseated easily.
- Seeks out fast or spinning activities, which frequently interfere with their daily routine.
- Over or under reacts to touch, avoids getting “messy” with play (avoids paint, sand, glue, etc) at home or school.
- Seeks out “rough” types of play, craves deep pressure and “hugs” more than other children.
- Appears to not be aware of others in his/her body space.
- Appears over or under sensitive to light and/or sounds (Covers their ears with the vacuum cleaner, may not respond when name is called and you know their hearing is okay, prefers the dark or shades eyes with hand when in the light) .
- Becomes excited with a lot of visual stimuli.
- Appears restless and fidgety.
- Impulsive or risk-taking behavior.
- Have difficulty organizing or structuring activities, difficulties with transitions between tasks, or react negatively to a change in their routine.
- Display poor work behaviors and require verbal cueing from an adult to complete simple tasks.
- Picky eater, avoids certain tastes or textures of food, on a limited diet.