

## **Occupational Therapy**

Occupational Therapy in the school system is a related service that focuses on student participation in the curriculum in the least restricted environment (classroom).



### **Occupational Therapy May Address the Following Skills:**

- Sensory Processing/Modulation
- Self Regulation
- Postural Control
- Fine Motor/Self Care
- Motor Planning
- Bilateral Motor Coordination
- Visual Motor Integration
- Spatial Organization
- Visual Perception
- Ocular Motor Control

### **Signs that Occupational Therapy May Be Necessary:**

- The student is over or under reactive to sensation including sound, touch, movement, smell or taste.
- The student has difficulty maintaining their attention in class.
- The student has difficulty maintaining an upright posture or stabilizing objects in their hands.
- The student has difficulty manipulating objects such as a pencil, scissor or fasteners.
- The student has difficulty organizing, planning and executing skills in a refined and efficient manner.
- The student has difficulty performing tasks when using both hands together.
- The student has difficulty drawing, coloring, handwriting and/or cutting on a line with a scissor.
- The student has difficulty organizing written work on paper, completing puzzles, finding an object in a background and/or matching objects.

- The student has difficulty with visual scanning, visual convergence and/or saccadic eye movement.



### **Is There a Difference Between School-Based Occupational Therapy and Clinic-Based Occupational Therapy?**

- School-based Occupational Therapy addresses issues that interfere with the student's ability to participate in the classroom.
- Clinic-based Occupational Therapy might address the above as well as functional skills that do not necessarily interfere with accessing the curriculum.

## **How Does A Student Qualify for Occupational Therapy in the School Setting?**

- A request for an Occupational Therapy evaluation or screening originates from the Student Review Committee or the special education office.
- Once the evaluation is completed, a team meeting is held to discuss results and to determine eligibility for special education services. In order to be eligible for Occupational Therapy services the presence of an eligible disability must be met. The disability must interfere with the student's participation in school activities.
- Occupational Therapy intervention is recommended as a related service to special education when the team determines that the student requires OT to access the curriculum, participate, and make effective progress.
- Occupational Therapy services are required to be provided in the least restricted environment.

## **Occupational Therapy Intervention May Be Provided in a Variety of Ways.**

- **Accommodations** – may include strategies or assistive technology. It does not change the content of what is being taught.
- **Modification** – is a change to the general education curriculum or other material being taught. The teaching strategies are modified so the material is presented differently and/or the expectations of what the student will master are changed.
- **Consultation** – involves the OT service provider working with other school staff to assist the student in achieving his or her educational goals.
- **Direct Services** – the occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant has direct contact with the student (in or out of class).

## **Occupational Therapy Services**



### **Stacey Polsinello- OTR/L**

Stacey received her Masters Degree in Occupational Therapy from the University of New Hampshire

### **Jessica Bostick-COTA**

Jessica graduated in 1997 from Mt. Ida College with an Associate's Degree in Allied Science/Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, is licensed in Massachusetts as an Occupational Therapy Assistant.

### **Wendy Schneider-COTA**

Wendy graduated from North Shore Community College with an Associate of Science/Occupational and Physical Therapy Assistant, is licensed in Massachusetts as an Allied Health Professional for OT and PT Assistants.

**Ashland Public Schools  
Student Services**

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