

SCHOOL BASED PHYSICAL THERAPY (PT) IDEA FACT SHEET

The following fact sheet provides general information for parents, physicians, and others on the topic of educational physical therapy. Please check with your school district for additional information.

✓ **What is school-based physical therapy?**

- A related service in **special education** that could include the evaluation/screening, consultation, collaboration and/or interventions with students whose qualifying educational disability, developmental delay, and/or functional performance **interferes with the ability to learn** in the areas of physical disability, bodily malfunction and pain, injury, manipulation, positioning, mobility, self-regulation, and any bodily or mental conditions.

✓ **Who determines the need for school-based physical therapy?**

- Determination of need is a collaborative effort conducted by the school team, including the parent, and school-based PT. The student must first be eligible for special education to be considered for school-based physical therapy.

✓ **Can a physician order school-based physical therapy?**

- The physician can recommend PT to the family and school, **but the school team makes the final decision** on whether school based PT will be provided.

✓ **Who provides physical therapy at school?**

- A licensed physical therapist and/or therapy assistant hired or contracted by the school.

✓ **What is the difference between school-based and non-school-based physical therapy?**

- Non-school-based PT is identified by the medical team based upon the medical condition. School-based PT is a part of the student's special education and addresses functional needs that are necessary for the student to participate and be successful in the educational environment. **It must be educationally relevant. Not all children needing medically based PT will need school-based PT at school.**

✓ **Who pays for school-based physical therapy?**

- If a student is found to be eligible by the school team for PT, the school pays for the service. Medicaid allows districts to bill for PT services for special education eligible students with parent consent. **Non-school-based PT is the responsibility of the parents.**

For more information, contact your school district or go to www.opi.mt.gov.

Thank You

Local Contact: _____

