

SCHOOL BASED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT) IDEA FACT SHEET

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

✓ **What is school-based occupational 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 fine motor skills, self-regulation, or activities of daily living.

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

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

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

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

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

- A certified occupational therapist and/or certified assistant hired or contracted by the school.

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

- Non-school-based OT is identified by a medical team based upon a medical condition. School-based OT 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 OT will need school-based OT at school.**

✓ **Who pays for school-based vs. non-school-based occupational therapy?**

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

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

Thank You

Local Contact: _____

