

SCHOOL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES FOR STUDENTS (POINTS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO REFERRAL)

Criteria: CCAC-School Health Support Services (SHSS) are mandated for children who require services to attend school, receive instruction or participate in school routine with severe motor skill deficits and/or sensory difficulties that impact many activities of daily living and not only printing/writing difficulties.

Since children develop at different rates and in different ways, ***care should be taken to ensure that developmental differences are not automatically seen as disabilities/delays.*** Some children may not develop all of the foundational or 'readiness' motor skills necessary to function successfully at school until as late as age seven. ***Nevertheless, severe motor dysfunction may be identified as early as Kindergarten.***

A full medical/developmental assessment will provide valuable information for school and OT in planning interventions to support student's needs.

Indicators: The following indicators will support OT assessment:

- a) A significant fine and/or gross motor deficit and/or sensory difficulties that are severely limiting the child's function at school.
- b) Evidence that the child's motor ability is significantly below his intellectual ability. The CCAC acknowledges that this discrepancy between motor ability and intellectual ability may be identified ***in either of two ways:***
 1. For a child in whom coexisting processing and attention deficits are minimal, performance at academic grade level is limited primarily by motor deficits.
 2. For a child in whom coexisting processing and attention deficits are significant and affecting academic performance, an educational assessment (teacher observation or formal academic testing) suggests normal intellect.

The CCAC acknowledges that ***children with learning difficulties, mental health concerns, behavioural difficulties and attention deficits need to be accommodated, and the following should be evident:***

- a) The school team has developed a plan/program that outlines the strategies that address the confirmed or suspected learning disability, behavioural or attention deficit.
- b) Pharmaceutical or behavioural interventions are minimizing the impact of the attention deficit or behavioural difficulty in order for the child to benefit from OT consultation.
- c) Learning difficulties can be clearly described by the teacher so that the OT will be aware of their impact on school performance vs. the impact of motor deficit or sensory difficulties on school performance.
- d) Attention deficits, behavioural disorders, and mental health concerns are appropriately investigated (medically) and are controlled so that strategies to manage motor dysfunction or sensory difficulties will be effective.

- e) Teaching strategies that are used to accommodate any of the child's above described difficulties at school will be shared with the OT so that the therapist can develop a complementary plan of intervention.

Occupational therapy intervention for children with motor delays and/ or sensory difficulties will be a health based consultative process that is a support to, rather than a substitution for the education based teaching process, and will not include:

- Teaching the child to recognize numbers and letters
- Teaching the child to print the alphabet in either manuscript or cursive style
- Teaching the child specific fine motor skills such as colouring, scissor use and drawing.
- Instructing the child in keyboarding once an appropriate program has been identified due to child's motor deficits
- Instructing the child in specific physical education or playground tasks such as ball skills or balancing skills
- Teaching the child specific self-care skills. This is primarily a parent/caregiver/school personnel responsibility.

OT consultative services regarding task modification, assistive devices and general strategies will be offered to parents/caregivers/school personnel so that they can help the child improve functional motor skills and implement sensory strategies needed for school and home.