

The All Bright Spotlight

All Bright Therapies

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The Role of OT in Pediatrics

Put simply, pediatric OT's help children to participate in the activities that they need and want to do on a daily basis. An occupation, by definition, is an activity that occupies one's time in a meaningful way. A child's primary occupation is play. Other occupations are dressing, bathing, their sleep routine, eating, going to school, and interacting with family and friends. Most people have experience with OT's role in fine motor skills (hand skill development), but our scope extends much further than that.

It is an important role of the occupational therapist to facilitate coordinated motor skills, particularly in the arm and hands because most functional activities, or activities of daily living, require good hand coordination. Common areas to address include: using both hands together, eye/hand coordination, hand strength, dexterity, motor planning, and trunk strength/endurance. An OT might facilitate some of these skills through guided physical activities including whole-body exercises: crawling, climbing, jumping, running, swinging, and of course hand exercises. OT's will make hand and arm splints/braces as necessary. An OT might address the way a baby is able to manipulate a rattle, and the way a preschooler is able to hold their crayon. They might address eye hand coordination by (cont'd)

Should I be Concerned About My Toddler's Language?

Everyone knows "someone" who has a child that didn't talk until he/she was four; so how are parents supposed to know when to be concerned if their child isn't talking?

Babies begin learning language soon after they are born. They begin watching your face and listening to your sounds as you talk to them. They begin playing with their voices as they coo and eventually babble with consonant sounds. These babbling sounds turn into vocal and verbal turn taking in their first "conversations" with you. Around 12 months, your baby should be using his/her first words spontaneously, imitating familiar words and picking up new words frequently. Natural language learning is a rapid process! By 18 months, your toddler should be using 15-20 words and nearly 100 or more by 24 months. Sometime just before 24 months, toddlers should also begin combining words into short phrases.

So, when should you talk to your child's pediatrician about a referral for an evaluation? Consider the following "red flags" as warning signs of a possible speech/language delay. Talk with your pediatrician if you have any concerns.

-Decreased eye contact during interaction
-Decreased/absent response to sounds and voices
-No babbling by 9 months
-Does not imitate sounds or simple words by 12 months
-Does not identify/point to familiar objects by 15 months
-Demonstrates any "loss" of language/words

In short, if you have any concerns regarding your child's communication, it's always best to have him/her evaluated by a speech-language pathologist. Always trust your intuition.

-Joni Prihoda, MS CCC-SLP

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teaching a toddler to put blocks into a container, and by teaching a kindergartener how to properly form their letters. Other areas of focus may include helping children improve decision making, problem solving, abstract reasoning and perceptual skills.

OT's also address sensory processing, perceptual, and cognitive skills as they impact a child's performance. Sensory processing, or sensory integration, is the process of taking in information from the environment with what we hear, see, touch, taste, smell as well as the feeling of movement and body position/body awareness, and making sense of it. If children are overly sensitive, or are under-sensitive to cues around them, it can be very difficult to pay attention, interact meaningfully, and learn from their environment. Differences in this area of processing can often lead to difficulties with self regulation and calming. An OT might be working with a family to find ways to soothe a fussy baby to sleep, and might be working with a three year old to improve their attention span. They might address a child's picky eating behaviors, sensitivity to their clothing, or their dislike of loud noises.

There are many occupations in a child's daily routine, and there are many ways in which an OT can help a child maximize their potential; too many to list here. If you have any questions about occupational therapy services for your child, talk with your pediatrician or give us a call.

-Kaitlyn Davis, OTD OTR/L

Services We Offer:

Speech Therapy:

Apraxia • Articulation • Phonological Disorders
Pragmatic and Social Language Disorders
Cleft Lip and Palate and Craniofacial Syndromes
Cerebral Palsy and Neuromotor Disorders
Genetic Syndromes • Speaking Valves

Occupational Therapy:

Poor Motor Planning • Motor Delayed Infants
Fine and Visual Motor Delays • Handwriting Difficulties
Regulation Disorders • Sensory Integration Dysfunction
Torticollis • Brachial Plexus Injury
Splinting and Bracing

Groups and Classes:

Social Language Groups • Articulation Groups • Language Development Groups • Feeding Group • Apraxia Group
Body Awareness Group • Handwriting and Pre-writing Group • Self Regulation Group • Parent Education Course

**We currently have availability for Speech and Occupational Therapy group for children aged 2.5 to 4 years of age.
Please call if you are interested.**

Some Helpful Websites for Winter Activities:

Games, stories and more for helping children learn language and pre-reading skills

<http://www.meddybemps.com/>

A family resource for speech motor planning difficulties

<http://www.tayloredmktg.com/dyspraxia/>

Games, songs, picture cards and printable resources

<http://dotolearn.com/index.htm>

Games and resources for early literacy

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/lions/>

Early childhood play activities

<http://www.theideabox.com>

Cutting activities and coloring pages

<http://www.preschoolactivitybox.com>