

When To Refer To Occupational Therapy

A Quick Clinical Reference for Pediatricians & Office Teams

Fine Motor & Hand Skills

- Difficulty with crayons, pencils, scissors, or utensils
- Difficulty drawing, coloring, pre-writing, or handwriting
- Unable to complete buttons, zippers, small objects, or has decreased hand strength

Sensory Processing & Regulation

- Overwhelmed by sounds, touch, movement, or busy environments
 - Strong reactions, sensory seeking, or sensory avoiding
- Difficulty recovering after sensory input

Feeding & Mealtimes

- Extremely limited food variety or strong food aversions
- Difficulty tolerating textures, smells, or appearances
- Difficulty using utensils or participating in mealtime routines

Self Care & Independence

- Poor dressing, undressing, toileting, or hygiene routines
- Difficulty using utensils, cups, or everyday items
- Needing significantly more assistance than expected for age

Motor Skills & Coordination

- Balance, coordination, body awareness, or motor planning difficulties
- Difficulty learning new motor skills
- Avoids playground or physical activities

School & Classroom Participation

- Pre-writing or handwriting difficulties
- Trouble with classroom materials or fine-motor tasks
- Difficulty participating in age-appropriate classroom activities

If you are unsure, an OT evaluation can help determine whether additional support is appropriate.



Pediatric OT

Referral Cheat Sheet

A Simple 3-Step Path From Concern To Care

1

IDENTIFY A CONCERN

Fine Motor • Gross Motor • Sensory Processing • Feeding •
Self-Care • Regulation • Coordination • Development •
School Participation • Socialization

2

SEND THE REFERRAL

Child's Name & DOB • Parent/Guardian Contact • Reason
For Referral • Relevant Developmental History

3

WE'LL TAKE IT FROM THERE

We'll connect with the family, review needs, complete an
individualized evaluation, provide recommendations, &
collaborate when appropriate.

Not sure whether a child is an appropriate referral?
Give us a call—we're happy to help.



5 Signs

Your Child May Benefit From OT

Every child develops at their own pace, but sometimes, a little extra support can make everyday activities that much easier.

1

EVERY DAY TASKS FEEL REALLY DIFFICULT

Dressing • Utensil Use • Brushing Teeth • Toileting • Completing Buttons, Zippers, or Shoes

2

FINE MOTOR TASKS ARE FRUSTRATING

Coloring • Drawing • Scissors • Pencil / Crayon Use • Blocks or Small Toys

3

YOUR CHILD SEEMS EASILY OVERWHELMED

Sounds • Crowds • Touch • Movement • Textures • Seeking or Avoiding Sensory Input • Picky / Restrictive Eating

4

TRANSITIONS & BIG FEELINGS ARE DIFFICULT

Frequent Meltdowns • Changes in Routine • Moving Between Activities • Calming After Upset

5

YOU JUST FEEL LIKE SOMETHING ISN'T QUITE RIGHT

Your child may avoid activities, struggle more than peers with routines, or need more help than expected.

What Can OT Do?

An OT evaluation can help determine whether additional support may be beneficial. An evaluation doesn't automatically mean your child needs ongoing therapy—sometimes families simply need additional information, simple home-based strategies, and reassurance.