

School Occupational Therapy

School occupational therapy services are designed to support student engagement and participation in meaningful and important school occupations (e.g., literacy, math, self-care, preparation for adulthood, school/extracurricular activities). School occupational therapy practitioners work not only with individual students but also with groups of students, classrooms, teams, schools, districts, and educational systems. Their professional contributions often extend to students under IDEA (2004), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015.

Occupational Therapy

Occupation

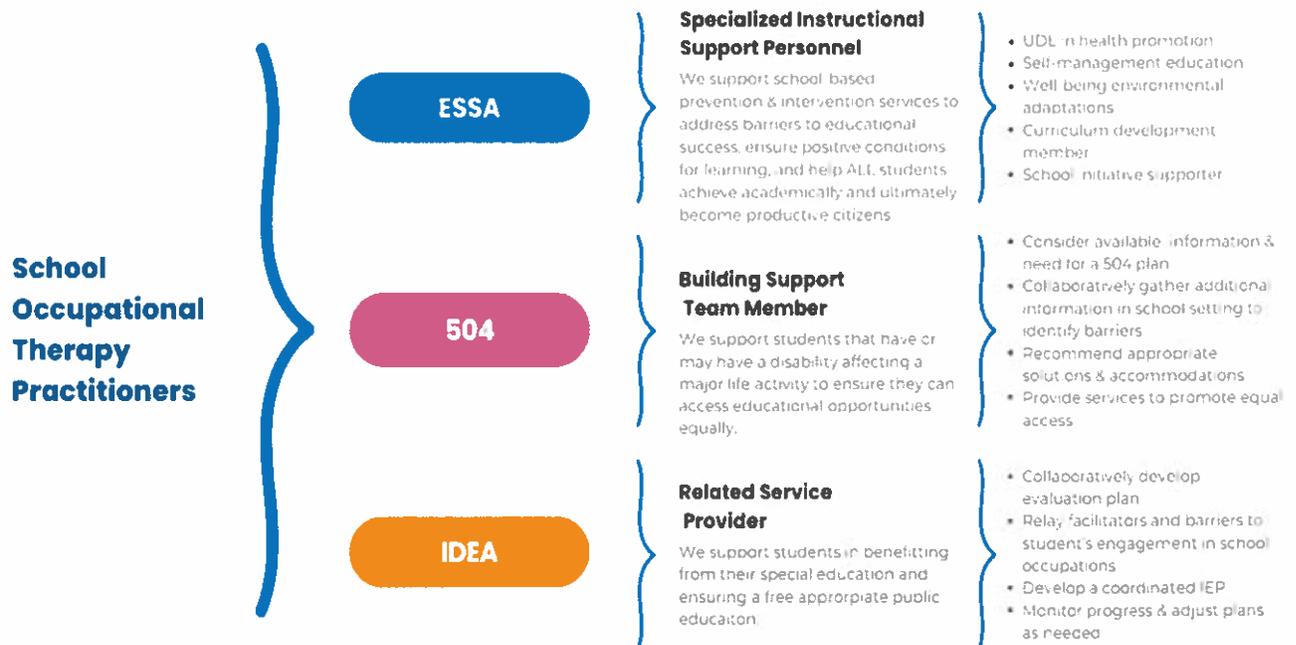
Occupy

How do students occupy their day?
Are they engaged & participating in meaningful & important school occupations?

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Role of School Occupational Therapy Practitioners

In interprofessional teams, occupational therapy practitioners take on various roles and responsibilities in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (2008), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004). Here are some examples of how school occupational therapy practitioners assist students, teams, and the education system.



Created in Canva. References: ESSA, 2015; Frolek-Clark et al., 2019; IDEA, 2004; Rehabilitation Act, 2008



Med v. Ed

Both medical and school occupational therapy services share the common goal of improving individuals' functioning, independence, and quality of life. However, differences exist in their practice settings, service delivery approaches, funding, and goals. Medical occupational therapy addresses health-related concerns that impact a child's occupational performance in various settings (e.g., home, community), whereas school occupational therapy focuses on supporting students within the educational context.

	 Medical	 Educational
Setting	Services provided in healthcare setting: hospital, clinic, rehabilitation center, private practice, and, at times, child's home	Services provided in educational context: classrooms, outdoor learning spaces, school environments (e.g., bus, cafeteria, hallways) Students confined to home due to medical needs receive homebound instruction and related services specified in their IEP
Service Delivery	<p>Direct Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child-level • Group-level <p>Indirect Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population-level (funding, community access, legislative advocacy) 	Direct & Indirect Services along a continuum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-level • Group-level (small group, classroom) • Population-level (program specific, school-wide, district-wide)
Funding	<p>Medical insurance helps pay for medically necessary outpatient occupational therapy. Often requires a child's primary care provider to certify need. Number of visits may be limited per benefit period.</p> <p>Occupational therapy services not covered by medical insurance can be privately funded by the family. Grants or waivers may also exist.</p>	<p>Educational funding supports occupational therapy services that are relevant to students' educational needs.</p> <p>CT's Medicaid School Based Child Health Program subsidizes educational funding for covered occupational therapy services included in an IEP or 504 plan to Medicaid eligible children. Requires parental consent and cannot negatively impact a child's medical benefits.</p>
Goal	<p>Habilitation & Rehabilitation</p> <p>To improve or restore a child's functional abilities, independence, and overall well-being in the context of their health condition.</p>	<p>Access & Participation</p> <p>ESSA: To support a public health approach in education, removing barriers, fostering positive learning conditions, & helping all students in academic success & citizenship</p> <p>Section 504: To ensure students have inclusive access to their education & school activities</p> <p>IDEA: To provide services when needed so students benefit from special education</p>
Collaboration	Often with child's family and healthcare team, including physicians, nurses, and other therapists to address the overall health and well-being of the child	Often with educators, special education teams, and parents to support the student's academic success and participation in school life
Exchange of Information	With signed consent, maintaining professional exchanges with occupational therapy practitioners in the school setting is beneficial for holistic support	With signed consent, maintaining professional exchanges with occupational therapy practitioners in the medical setting is beneficial for holistic support

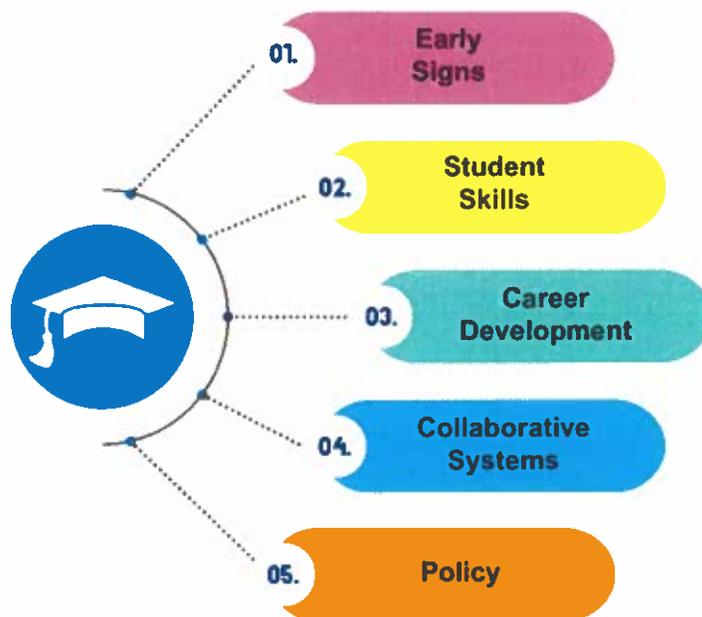
Education & Predictors of Success

All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself.

A Nation At Risk, p. 6, 1983

The above quote presents a particular understanding on the purpose of education. In the table that follows, you'll find examples of how school occupational therapy practitioners support students in achieving success in academics and in their future educational pursuits, job opportunities, self-sufficiency, community engagement, and overall well-being based on predictors. These predictors are drawn from Hanover Research's 2016 report on early signs of academic achievement and the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative's 2021 publication on predictors for life after secondary education. See Table 1.1 to understand how occupational therapy practitioners support students in meeting these predictors.

Predictors of Success



Created in Canva. Reference: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative, 2021