**Why Occupational Therapy?**

Occupational therapists are professionals who are expert in identifying the social, emotional, and physiological effects of illness and injury on human growth and development which can affect a child’s ability to participate in the occupations of childhood. Childhood occupations include learning how to care for self, participating in school learning activities, and learning to relate to others through play or experience in a variety of social situations.

Occupational therapy is a mandated related service for eligible students with disabilities to benefit from special education (Part B of IDEA) and as a primary service for young children (Part C) who are experiencing developmental delay. All children receiving school based occupational therapy services must have a written IFSP, IEP or 504 plan.

Occupational Therapy is provided to children with disabilities in schools and early childhood programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and a smaller number under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Who Provides OT Services?**

Occupational Therapy is provided by Occupational Therapists, and Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTAs) who are nationally registered and state licensed.

COTAs must be supervised by Occupational Therapists according to standards set by the American Occupational Therapy Association.

For More Information, Please Contact:

Your local school district OT Staff or SWSC Service Cooperative
1420 East College Drive
Marshall, MN 56258
(507)-537-2240
[www.swsc.org](http://www.swsc.org)
What Does Occupational Therapy Provide?

Services provided by school based occupational therapists are guided by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning as described in Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy in Educational Settings: A Manual for Minnesota Practitioners, Division of Special Education (2002).

Occupational Therapists provide child assessment, direct student service, and teacher and/or parent consultation to children with special needs.

What is the Purpose of Occupational Therapy?

The purpose of occupational therapy is to enable the special needs child to participate in the childhood occupations of play, self care, and learning within the environments of home, school and community.

Early Childhood

When serving early childhood populations, occupational therapists assist parents and other service providers to develop sensory, self regulation, and motor skills for school readiness. Specific types and length of service is determined through collaboration with the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) Team. Service may be provided directly to the child and parent or indirectly through consultation with staff.

School Age

When serving school age students, occupational therapists assist students and staff to develop functional motor skills, adaptive skills or modifications to maximize the child's performance in learning activities within educational environments. A student's motor development, sensory and self regulation behaviors, self care and independent functioning within routine environments are often addressed by school occupational therapists.

The specific type and length of service is determined through collaboration with the student's Individualized Educational (IEP) Team. Service may be provided directly to the student or indirectly through consultation with staff. This is determined through considering the student's needs, service requirement to meet the needs, and provision of services in the least restrictive environment.