



## Occupational Therapy (OT)

So, what does Occupational Therapy have to do with children? Usually the word 'occupation' is associated with an adult's job.

For children, occupation refers to their daily activities such as:

- Having age expected fine and gross motor skills (e.g. holding a pencil)
- Exploring their environment and learning through play
- Problem-solving and learning through everyday experiences
- Regulating emotions to cope with their world
- Socially interacting and engaging with friends and family
- Achieving self-care skills such as getting dressed and going to the toilet
- Being able to participate optimally in school-based activities

As paediatric occupational therapists, we look at how a child's sensory, physical, and social-emotional difficulties affect their ability to reach their fullest potential during daily activities. A fun and playful approach is used to help children build skills and reach their highest potential. Therapy sessions are individually tailored according to the child's skills, needs, personality, and environment. We see children with and without diagnoses. Sessions may be with the teacher/parent, child, or often a combination of both.

### What do you need for OT Telecare sessions?

- A private and safe area, with enough space to move around during gross motor activities
- A child size desk, with writing utensils may be required
- An adult (e.g. staff member, parent) to support the sessions
- A computer, laptop or tablet/iPad with a camera, microphone, speaker and a good internet connection.

Detailed information on requirements can be found in our [Telecare Set-up](#) handout or you can watch our [Getting Ready for Telecare](#) video.

### Individual Therapy

OT Telecare therapy sessions are typically structured as follows:

- Gather information from home and school, which assists with understanding the child's strengths and challenges.

- Meet the child and start to build a relationship.
- Standardised assessment will be administered if indicated.
- Goals are set in collaboration with parents or teachers, focused on supporting an area of difficulty
- Ongoing weekly Telecare therapy sessions.
- A progress report will be provided to the child's parents/carers and school.

## Regulation and Sensory Assessments

'Regulation' is a term that describes a person's ability to be in a calm, alert state. This paves the way for our ability to function at a higher level and to do things like pay attention, use language, control behaviour and learn. If the balance of calm and alert does not match the task at hand, it is very difficult for the task to be accomplished successfully.

We are all sensory beings who process and respond to incoming sensory input differently. This is one of the factors contributing to our ability to regulate. OTs help to explore the way a child receives messages from the senses and turns them into appropriate motor and behavioural responses.

A child struggling to attain a state of regulation may have meltdowns, have trouble focusing, have difficulty transitioning between activities, dislike change or appear anxious. They may have sensitivities or seek out certain sensations such as sound or touch inputs.

Regulation and Sensory Assessment sessions are typically structured as follows:

- Gather information from home and school, through interviewing a parent and a teacher.
- Observe the child's interactions in a session or the classroom.
- Feedback session with the parent and teacher. This includes discussion about strategies to support the child's regulation.
- Goals are set with the family.
- Therapy for the remainder of the school term.
- A full assessment report is provided to the parent/carer and school.

**Please contact our Telecare team to discuss how this program may support your child or student**

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