

Could my child benefit from occupational therapy?

Pediatric occupational therapy addresses children’s “occupations,” or the important activities they engage in on a daily basis—be that tying their shoes, writing their name, stacking blocks, or navigating a playground. Remediating and teaching these basic life skills through the use of play and therapeutic activities allows children to develop to their fullest potential and engage in age-appropriate activities with increased independence and confidence.

Fill out the checklist below to see if your child may benefit from occupational therapy. (Check all that apply when comparing your child to same-age peers.)

My child:

Sensory Processing

- Is intolerant to having hair washed or has an intense dislike of baths/showers
- Dislikes/cries during teeth brushing, hair brushing, or haircuts
- Avoids being hugged, kissed, and cuddled or “wipes off” kisses
- Finds socks, shoes, clothing tags or seams uncomfortable
- Avoids putting hands in messy substances
- Seems unaware of being touched or bumped or seeks out touch excessively
- Appears overly sensitive or easily distressed by loud noises or crowds
- Is an extremely picky eater
- Enjoys smelling items/intense smells
- Seems overly sensitive to light
- Avoids activities that challenge balance
- Appears hesitant or fearful of swings, slides, stairs, and other movement activities
- Takes excessive risks (i.e. on playground equipment, jumps from dangerous heights)
- Enjoys crashing or intense play
- Has difficulty managing changes in routine
- Has difficulty calming down after tantrums
- Appears clumsy

Fine Motor/Visual Motor Skills

- Holds a marker/pencil with an immature or unusual grasp
- Has difficulty drawing, coloring, and handwriting or avoids these activities
- Has difficulty holding scissors correctly and cutting
- Has difficulty opening jars and containers
- Has difficulty manipulating toys
(i.e. stacking blocks, rolling Play-Doh into a log, building with Legos)
- Has difficulty completing puzzles

Gross Motor Skills/Motor Planning

- Cannot throw, catch, or kick a ball or appears clumsy or weak when doing so
- Has difficulty getting in and out of a chair/falls out of chair often
- Appears clumsy or falls/trips often

- Cannot navigate ladders, slides, monkey bars or other playground equipment
- Cannot pedal a bike
- Cannot walk across a balance beam without stepping off
- Cannot perform jumping jacks, or imitate "Simon Says" body positions
- Has difficulty keeping up with peers in gym, sports, and gymnastics/play classes

Self-Help Skills

- Has difficulty independently drinking
(holding a bottle, managing a straw, drinking from an open cup without spilling)
- Has difficulty independently eating (self-feeding cereal, using a fork, spoon, or knife)
- Has difficulty getting dressed and undressed (including zippers, buttons, and snaps)
- Has difficulty putting on shoes/tying laces
- Has difficulty independently grooming (brushing teeth, brushing hair, taking a shower)
- Is delayed in potty training

If your child receives 3 or more checks in any area, occupational therapy may help!