

# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

## JOB SUMMARY:

Utilizing leadership, advocacy, and collaboration, school-based occupational therapist provide screening, evaluation, educational program and transition planning, therapeutic intervention, and exit planning for students identified with or suspected of having disabilities that interfere with their ability to perform daily life activities or participate in necessary or desired occupations. Professional judgment and clinical knowledge are used to develop individualized programming based on occupational performance deficits in the areas of personal care, student role, interaction skills, process skills, play, community integration/work, and graphic communication. Occupational therapist regularly collaborates with other members of the school's special education team. Occupational therapist is expected to independently review outcomes and modify intervention programs. Clinical reasoning and professional judgment are essential to ensuring the safety of students protecting liability of the school and the therapist.

Below are the major functions of the occupational therapist working in educational environments. Because each work situation is different, it is not likely that all of the evidences will be demonstrated by all occupational therapist.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK:

### A. Identification, Evaluation, and Planning

1. Collaborates with other disciplines to ensure team understanding of student occupational performance strengths and needs, through evaluation, educational program planning, and service delivery.
2. Evaluates the student's ability and formulates the student's occupational profile through a variety of functional, behavioral, and standardized assessments, skilled observation, checklists, histories, and interviews.
3. Synthesizes evaluation results into a comprehensive written report which reflects strengths and barriers to student participation in the educational environment; directs program development; and guides evidence-based intervention.
4. Develops occupationally based intervention plans based on student needs and evaluation results.
5. Participates in multidisciplinary meetings to review evaluation results, integrate findings with other disciplines, offer recommendations, and develop individual education plans and intervention plans to achieve IEP goals.

### B. Service Delivery

1. Provides targeted, evidence-based therapeutic intervention to facilitate student participation and occupational performance within the school environment.
2. Consults with the school-based team to achieve student outcomes.

3. Adapts and modifies the environment including assistive technology and training instructional staff to meet individual needs and to help students function as independently as possible.
4. Educates students, educational personnel, and family to facilitate skills in areas of occupation as well as health maintenance and safety.
5. Monitors and reassess the effects of occupational therapy intervention and the need to continue, modify, or discontinue intervention.
6. Documents occupational therapy services to ensure accountability of service provision and to meet standards for reimbursement of services as appropriate.

#### C. Program Administration and Management

1. Prioritizes and schedules work tasks independently.
2. Submits to School Steps timesheets for occupational therapy screening, assessments, therapy/instructional services and other activities.
3. Maintains an updated schedule of each student's therapy.
4. Provides and follows schedules for assigned schools and informs School Steps Administration of departures from schedule.
5. Arranges travel time to maximize contact with students and to accomplish other duties.
6. Manages inventory of therapeutic equipment and assessments.
7. Maintains clinical and administrative records in accordance with professional standards, state guidelines, and school system policy.
8. Adheres to federal and state legislation, regulation, and policies that affect occupational therapy practice.
9. Reviews occupational therapy services for quality improvement and makes recommendations to ensure quality of services.

#### D. Professional Growth and Ethics

1. Participates in continuing education for professional development to ensure practice consistent with best practice and to meet California license requirement.
2. Uses professional literature, evidence based research, and continuing education content to make practice decisions.
3. Uses professional Code of Ethics and standards of practice to guide ethical decision making in practice.
4. Maintains confidentiality of information received.

5. Complies with established lines of authority within the parameters of professional standards.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:**

- A. Knowledge of human development throughout the life span and integrates with student's unique developmental status.
- B. Knowledge and appreciation of the influence of disabilities, socio-cultural and socioeconomic factors on student's ability to participate in occupations.
- C. Knowledge and use of occupational therapy theories, models of practice, principles, and evidence based practice to guide intervention decisions.
- D. Knowledge of the federal, state, local legislation, regulations, policies and procedures that mandate and guide occupational therapy practice in schools.
- E. Ability to gather and assess outcomes program evaluation data and to use to modify services at the programmatic level.
- F. Ability to determine the need for an occupational therapy evaluation and to select and administer appropriate assessment tools to evaluate the student.
- G. Ability to interpret the evaluation data and write a comprehensive report that reflects strengths and barriers to student's participation and occupational performance.
- H. Ability to participate collaboratively with multi-disciplinary educational teams to develop IEPs to meet student needs.
- I. Ability to develop occupationally based intervention plans based on evaluation information.
- J. Ability to provide evidence based occupational therapy intervention to improve student's performance skills and participation.
- K. Ability to adapt and modify environments, equipment, and materials including assistive technology.
- L. Ability to plan, coordinate, and conduct continuing education for educational personnel, parents, and students.
- M. Ability to use professional literature, evidence based research, and continuing education content to make practice decisions.

## **EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS:**

- A. Master's Degree from an accredited occupational therapy program.
- B. Satisfactory completion of the examination by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy.
- C. Current State License.
- D. Patience and strong interpersonal skills to interact with students and relate to their physical limitations.
- E. Good verbal and written skills necessary for communication with students, parents, physicians, and other health and school professionals.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS:**

- A. Risk of exposure to infectious disease.
- B. Crisis situations requiring emergency response capabilities.

## **PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

- A. Extensive standing and walking.
- B. Frequent lifting, positioning, and handling of students.
- C. Reaching, stooping, bending, kneeling, and crouching.