

Exceptional Student Education  
Henry County Schools

# PROGRAM GUIDANCE: RELATED SERVICES



BETTER TOGETHER

## Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy Guidance

### Definition and Overview

School-based occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) are related services as defined under § 300.34 of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and are provided to students who meet criteria for special education services under Special Education Rule 13 160-4-7-.05, Eligibility Determination and Categories of Eligibility. The OT and PT provide support for the teams to assist the student in achieving the IEP goals and objectives without writing their own goals in isolation. Therapy should occur, in the educational environment or setting as opposed to a pull-out service. These environments include, but are not limited to the classroom, cafeteria, gymnasium, playground, restrooms, hallways and bus, as well as, community locations where educational instruction takes place.

Definition of Occupational and Physical Therapy Services Special education instruction is designed to meet a student's unique educational needs resulting from a physical, emotional, cognitive, and/or communication disability. Related services are those supportive services that may be required to assist a student in benefiting from special education instruction as described in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

### Instructional Expectations

In the educational setting, occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) are necessary services designed to support the student's achievement of the educational goals and objectives as defined in the IEP.

- OT services generally focus on the development and strengthening of visual motor, fine motor, sensory processing, and self-help skills; and the design, implantation, and training in the use of environmental adaptations and adaptive devices to support functioning of individuals with disabilities.
- PT services generally focus on the development and strengthening of gross motor skills to achieve appropriate mobility and endurance to support functioning of individuals with disabilities. Physical therapy services also focus on monitoring the function, fit, and proper usage of mobility aids and adaptive devices.

### Educational Relevance of Therapy

There are significant differences between services that may be required for an individual student due to medical issues and services that may be required for a student to benefit from an appropriate educational program. For example, the medical model for physical and occupational therapy provides rehabilitative treatment for acute and chronic conditions. In the medical model, intensive therapy is often provided during an acute or post-operative phase. Medical/rehabilitative services for disabling conditions may require treatment in a medical rehabilitation setting and are not the responsibility of the local school district.

If a student's disability is not interfering with his/her ability to participate in or benefit from an appropriate regular or special education program, the student may not require OT and/or PT as

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educationally related services. OT and/or PT related services are provided only when necessary for the student to benefit from the Special Education services described in the IEP, as agreed upon by the IEP committee.

The fact that a student may have a diagnosed disability does not in and of itself constitute a need for occupational therapy or physical therapy services. Services for a student with a medically diagnosed condition or a medical prescription requesting related services will not be provided if the student can benefit from appropriate educational program without those services.

1. Educational-based therapy is provided in the following situations:
  - a) Student has met eligibility criteria for special education as per State Special Education Rules.
  - b) Therapy has been determined necessary through a documented assessment process, to enable the student to benefit from the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Accommodation Plan.
2. Medical-based therapy is provided in the following situations:
  - a) Acute rehabilitation (i.e. prior to or following surgery or injury).
  - b) Therapy deemed necessary but which does not enhance education IEP goals and objectives.
  - c) Therapy deemed necessary but the student does not qualify for special education programming or a 504 Accommodation Plan.
  - d) Therapy maintenance program if the student is functional in his/her educational setting.

### Behavioral Supports and Resources

The Sensory Room is reserved for students with identified sensory processing and self-regulation deficits that are noted in their permanent records. School staff must be trained by the Occupational Therapist in appropriate and safe use of equipment, to utilize the room and equipment in it. No students should be present in the Sensory Room without teacher/support staff supervision.

Sensory Rooms should be maintained by all staff utilizing the equipment. Students should not be allowed to move equipment or use equipment in an unsafe manner. In the case of broken or damaged equipment, please notify the occupational therapist assigned to your building.

### IEP Team Guidance

#### **Types of services available:**

#### **Direct**

Direct service refers to occupational therapy or physical therapy (OT or PT) provided to students primarily by the therapist in collaboration with the student's teacher and other staff. The purpose of direct therapy is to provide training in strategies necessary to reach functional performance on the student's individual education program (IEP) objectives within the educational setting.

**Direct services are recommended only when the identified problem prevents successful educational outcomes based on IEP objectives and when other personnel cannot be trained**

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**to implement the necessary strategies.** This service may take place in a variety of environments (i.e., classroom, cafeteria, gym, etc). Direct services may include consultation with other members of the IEP committee, who could assist with student’s progress by incorporating specialized training into daily activities.

Direct OT and PT services are listed on the IEP with specific recommendations concerning frequency and duration.

### **Consultation**

Consultation refers to direct and indirect service where the teacher and other staff are trained by the therapist to assist the student with strategies to meet specified educational objectives.

Consultation involves the exchange of ideas and skills among staff related to the educational program for a student and/or development of specialized materials or equipment necessary to assist the student to benefit from his/her educational program. Consultation requires direct interaction between the student and the therapist in the educational environment. This service may take place in a variety of environments (i.e., classroom, gym, cafeteria, etc.). Consultation is recommended when the identified problem interferes with, but does not prevent, the achievement of functional performance on the IEP objectives and when other personnel can be trained to implement the necessary strategies.

Consultation OT and PT services are listed on the IEP with specific recommendations concerning frequency and duration.

### **Periodic Check**

Periodic check refers to the monitoring of a student relative to his/her instructional and/or management needs. Periodic checks may take place in a variety of instructional environments that match the student’s IEP (i.e., classroom, cafeteria, community based instruction site, vocational site, etc.).

Periodic check, as a service, is discussed in the minutes of the IEP. Minimally periodic checks are provided one time per nine-week grading period.

### **Administrator’s Guide**

The following is a list of possible “look fors” that an administrator may observe regarding OT/PT services.

OT Related Adaptive Equipment (i.e. slant boards, pencil grips, scissors, etc.)
PT Related Adaptive Equipment (i.e. adaptive chairs, standing frames, changing tables, walkers)
Sensor-Based Equipment (i.e. weighted lap pads, pressure vests, adaptive seating options)
Written Expression (i.e. adaptive paper, keyboarding programs, <i>Learning Without Tears Handwriting Programs</i> , <i>The TV Teacher – Alphabet Beats</i> )

### **Reference List/Citations**

American Occupational Therapy Association. [AOTA]. (2014). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain & Process, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*,

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68, S1-S48. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2014.682006>

American Occupational Therapy Association. [AOTA]. (2016). *Occupational therapy in school settings*. Retrieved from <https://www.aota.org/~media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/Professionals/WhatIsOT/CY/Fact-Sheets/School%20Settings%20fact%20sheet.pdf>

American Physical Therapy Association. [APTA]. (2016). *Physical therapy in school settings*. Retrieved from [https://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/Advocacy/Federal/Legislative\\_Issues/IDEA\\_ESEA/PhysicalTherapyintheSchoolSystem.pdf](https://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/Advocacy/Federal/Legislative_Issues/IDEA_ESEA/PhysicalTherapyintheSchoolSystem.pdf)

Georgia Department of Education [GaDOE]. (n.d.). *Occupational therapy and physical therapy*. Retrieved from <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Occupational-and-Physical-Therapy-.aspx>

Henry County Board of Education. (2018c). *HCBOE exceptional student education implementation manual*. McDonough, GA: Henry County Board of Education.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).

## Assistive Technology

### Definition and Overview

Assistive Technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program or product system that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. AT may be provided through no tech, low tech or high tech supports.

Assistive Technology helps students who have difficulty speaking, typing, writing, remembering, pointing, seeing, hearing, learning and various other learning needs. Different disabilities require different assistive technologies and supports.



### Instructional Expectations

Through Empower Henry County Schools students will receive 1:1 personal devices equipped with word prediction, speech to text and read aloud software. In addition, all adapted curriculum, preschool special needs, autism-adapted curriculum, and speech-language pathologists have access to the Henry County Schools district core word board to support communication in the educational environment. If the IEP team believes the use of the personal learning device and/or communication tool is not effective and would like to explore other options, an Assistive Technology Trial or Assessment should be considered. The following lists provides additional guidelines for AT in the classroom:

- Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist will help determine individual needs for Assistive Technology. This document should be completed at each annual review or as needed at other IEP meetings.
- Use of UDL tools to support reading, written expression and/or organizational skills to increase independence, access to curriculum and ability to complete assignments with improved performance should be used. Students should be taught the software features to work independently or with decreasing support. Lesson plans may identify when these tools are being implemented.
- Core Word Boards should be used in adapted curriculum classrooms and/or classrooms with minimally verbal and non-verbal students. Core Word boards will be displayed in the classroom in a location accessible to both the students and teachers will demonstrate use of the Core Word boards throughout instruction to model use of the tool.
- Minimally verbal and non-verbal students should have a plan for communication whether established through classroom tools or as developed in consultation with the Assistive Technology Department and IEP team. Use of a communication system (core word board, core word flip book, picture exchange, and iPad app or communication device) should be evident for these students. Adapted Curriculum and Autism classrooms should have visual supports displayed in the classroom to support receptive communication. This

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may include but is not limited to schedules, visual directions, and visual behavioral expectations and supports.

### Behavioral Supports and Resources

Selecting appropriate devices, software, programs/application, and hardware Technology staff is available to assist case managers in this decision making process. Similarly, these staff members are available to provide training and support for the implementation of the selected specialized device, software, programs/applications, and/or hardware.

The Assistive Technology Department has resources to assist teachers in creating visual supports to engineer the learning environment to support communication, behavior and learning. Please see the attached Assistive Technology Tool Kit for a list of available AT resources in the district.

### Reference List/Citations

<https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/what-is-at/>

## Special Transportation

### Definition and Overview

A student's individualized education program (IEP) team is responsible for determining if transportation is required in order to adequately receive special education and related services. Each LEA providing special education is required to adopt policies for the programs and services it operates. These policies describe how special education transportation is coordinated with regular home-to-school transportation needs of students receiving special education services. Such policies must focus on students' needs as the primary consideration for determining transportation services.

This includes consideration of services that are provided in the setting appropriate to the needs of the student at the student's home school, or within the district. Consideration should be taken regarding the effect that the location of a placement will have on the length of time that a student has to or from school each day. If a student is receiving services outside of his/her residence area, the placement should be reviewed at least annually in order to determine if a placement closer to the student's residence would be appropriate.

The efficiency of a transportation system for special education is partially dependent on the location of the program sites and the placements of students. A demographic and geographic review that analyzed the present locations of programs, program needs, and population served should take place.

Whenever possible, students with disabilities will ride the regular school bus to and from school. Transportation is a related service as defined by IDEA regulations and includes travel to and from school and between schools. Transportation services also include specialized student and transport equipment such as safety vests, car seats, seat belts, and specialized buses with lift capabilities. This related service may also include a bus monitor and positive behavior support plan. School bus drivers will be informed and properly trained whenever the IEP addresses special transportation needs for a student.

### Primary Consideration: Pupil Needs

The specific needs of the pupil must be the primary consideration when an IEP team is determining any transportation needs. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Medical diagnosis and health needs consideration of whether long bus rides could affect a certain student's health (duration, temperature control, need for services, health emergencies); general ability and/or strength to ambulate/wheel; approximate distance from school or the distance needed to walk or wheel oneself to the school; consideration of pupil needs in inclement or very hot weather, other.
- Physical accessibility of curbs, sidewalks, streets, and public transportation systems.
- Consideration of a student's capacity to arrive at school on time, to avoid getting lost, to avoid dangerous traffic situations, and to avoid other potentially dangerous or exploitative situations on the way to and from school.



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- Behavioral Intervention Plans specified by the student's IEP and consideration of how to implement such plans while a student is being transported.
- Mid-day or other transportation needs as required on a student's IEP (for example: medical needs, physical intervention and management, authority to use special harnesses, vest, and belts, authority to operate special equipment, use of mobility aides, use of bus aides, and other) must also be taken into consideration when the IEP team discusses a student's placement and transportation needs.
- Extended school year services, should be another consideration of a student's need for transportation if considered necessary to provide a free appropriate public education as specified in a student's IEP.

Special Education transportation must be provided to allow the student to take part in nonacademic and extracurricular activities in the manner necessary to afford the student an equal opportunity for participation in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate.

### Instructional Expectations

It is the responsibility of the IEP Team to determine when transportation services should be included in the IEP as a related service. The decision must be made on a case-by-case basis and be based on the unique needs of the student and the basic concept of least restrictive environment.

### Behavioral Supports and Resources

Students with disabilities are subject to the same rules of discipline governing regular transportation, unless the student has a behavior plan indicating otherwise. School bus drivers will be trained to implement positive behavior interventions as indicated in a student's behavior plan.

During the period of any exclusion from bus transportation, students must be provided with an alternative form of transportation at no cost to the student or parent in order to be assured of having access to the required special education instruction and services. If an individual with exceptional needs is excluded from school bus transportation, the student is entitled to be provided with an alternative form of transportation at no cost to the pupil or parent or guardian provided that transportation is specified in the student's individualized education program."

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### Reference List/Citations

<http://www.glenncoe.org/documents/SELPA/42.1.1%20Transportation%20for%20Students%20w%20Disabilities%20-AR-.pdf>