

Collaboration with Your School-Based Occupational Therapist:

A Problem-Solving Approach to Learner Success

Our goal is to promote **ACCESS, PARTICIPATION, and ENGAGEMENT** to enhance student potential.

 **Learners**  **Settings**  **Strategies**



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1. What is school based occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy (OT) practitioners are related service professionals who provide a continuum of support under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As part of a problem solving team, OTs collaborate on physical, cognitive, self-regulation, adaptive and other aspects of educational performance. The OT's expertise includes activity and environmental analysis, accommodations and modifications with a goal of reducing the barriers to participation within the routines of the natural educational environment. (AOTA, 2013), (Types of IEPs i3, n.d.).

2. How is school based occupational therapy delivered?

To the maximum extent appropriate, learners requiring special education services, activities, and supports are educated within the natural routines with learners who do not require special education (Types of IEPs i3, n.d.). Research demonstrates that learners are most likely to reach success when they practice skills in the environment in which they occur. (Types of IEPs i3, n.d.) (Bazyk, 2021)

When collaborating as part of the team, which includes parents and/or guardians, an OT uses a problem solving approach for identified areas of concern to aid in developing strategies, taking into account the learner, the activity and the setting. (IEP Teams i3, n.d.)

The goal is to promote access to learning through participation and engagement by:

- Adapting activities and environments
- Offering instructional strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to support participation for all learners
- Collaborating with the school team to increase independence in daily living skills
- Supporting the school team with learner transition toward employment, community integration, and further education
- Problem solving learner specific assistive technology with the school team
- Promoting school mental health, positive behaviors and interactions
- Collaborating to address self regulation through sensory, cognitive, and motor needs
- Coaching, training and providing resources for school personnel and families

(AOTA, 2013)

Non-educationally related concerns for the student may be addressed by professionals outside of the educational setting.

3. Who determines if my child receives school-based occupational therapy support?

Through collaboration, support and service determinations are made by the IEP team, including the OT. (IEP Teams i3, n.d.)

4. How might occupational therapy services look on an IEP?

Embedded Services (special education related services embedded in natural settings (classroom, art, cafeteria, recess, extracurricular activities/ after-school)) are best practice (Bazyk, 2021). On your student's IEP, this is often listed as support for school personnel.

- [It's the law!](#)¹
- [Learning new skills occurs best in the 'real' environment.](#)³
- [Learners benefit.](#)⁴
- [Therapists gain a fuller picture of the learner's abilities and challenges.](#)¹
- [Teachers and other school personnel benefit from observing therapists model interventions.](#)⁵

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