

## Who are Occupational Therapists?

Occupational therapists (OTs) are regulated health care professionals who work with children in a variety of settings, including schools and leisure activities. Sometimes, children have more problems than is typical for their age with motor skills, sensory skills and/or self-care skills. This can make everyday activities a challenge to learn and master. Occupational therapists can help teachers; school staff and parents better understand and help these children succeed with everyday activities.

## What will the Occupational Therapist do?

OTs will work as part of the school team. Referrals come from the school based team and are sent home for parent signatures.

Occupational therapists see students with mobility issues, students with sensory needs, students with self-care needs and other students as caseloads allow.

- OTs have a lot of expertise in the adaptation of materials and tools to help individuals function to the best of their ability. For children with motor difficulties, adaptations to seating and desks, writing implements, paper, student agendas, worksheets, and storage of personal belongings are commonly recommended. Use of a computer may be recommended to help with writing.
- OTs can help teachers design grade appropriate classroom centres and share resources to help students develop motor skills.
- OTs can design and monitor programs for school staff to carry out.
- OTs often attends the IEP meetings and suggests appropriate goals for students.

## **Access to community resources that can help the student, the family and the teacher:**

- Occupational therapists can serve as a bridge between the health care system and the educational system. They bring knowledge of child development, anatomy and physiology and developmental disorders and the health and medical services available in the community. Occupational therapists can sign Justification of Equipment Forms for students and families

accessing Autism Funding. In cooperation with the physical therapist and the At Home Program wheelchairs and positioning equipment can be ordered.

- OTs and PTs submit names and needs for Sunnyhill's Outreach Seating Clinic that happens twice a year in Kelowna.