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## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

### ▪ What is Occupational Therapy?

**Occupational Therapy** is skilled treatment that helps individuals achieve independence in all facets of their lives. It gives people the "skills for the job of living" necessary for independent and satisfying lives. Services typically include:

- Customized treatment programs to improve one's ability to perform daily activities
- Performance skills assessments and treatments
- Adaptive equipment recommendations and usage training
- Guidance to family members and caregivers

Included in the field of **Occupational Therapy** is dealing with sensory integration development. Simply put, sensory integrative dysfunction is difficulty taking in, sorting out, and/or connecting information from the surrounding world.

### ▪ Who is Involved in Occupational Therapy?

**Occupational Therapy** practitioners are skilled professionals whose education includes the study of human growth and development with specific emphasis on the social, emotional, and physiological effects of illness and injury.

Children who have delays, impairments or an inability to perform functional activities are candidates for **Occupational Therapy**.

### ▪ What are the goals in Occupational Therapy?

A wide variety of goals from are designed to meet the needs of your child.

- Child directed treatment with a large variety of motor activities, suspended equipment, and climbing equipment
- Facilitation of developmental skills for functional tasks
- Acquisition of hand skills for fine motor tasks

- Promotion of oral motor development and eating skills
- Management of body position for self care and daily activities
- Development of perceptual motor skills
- Improvement of spatial and body perception
- Improvement of ability to concentrate and organize self
- Organization and sequencing of functional tasks

▪ **What is Sensory Integration Therapy?**

Each of our sensory systems has receptors, which communicate information to the brain. The senses of taste, smell, sight, hearing, and touch are commonly recognized. Less well known are the vestibular and proprioceptive systems. The vestibular system receptor organ is in the inner ear and gives us our sense of balance. Proprioceptive organs are located in the muscles and joints and give us sensory information about how our bodies are moving. Together, the touch, vestibular, and proprioceptive systems tells us all about our bodies. Other senses tell us about what is happening outside of our bodies.

These basic senses blend in such a way to enable us to function in daily life. It is this complex blending that is called *Sensory Integration*. For example, vision integrates with proprioception and touch making it possible to have eye/hand coordination to catch a ball. Proper organization of the senses is necessary for the brain to interpret a situation correctly and make an appropriate response.

▪ **How does it work?**

Each child's program is designed based on the individual's needs. An overview of the child's involvement with the therapist includes the following:

- Evaluate a child to determine if he or she has accomplished tasks appropriate to the child's age, such as dressing and play skills.
- Provide intervention to help a child appropriately respond to information coming through the senses. Intervention may include developmental activities, sensory integrations, and play activities.
- Facilitate play activities that aid a child in interacting and communicating with others.

▪ **What are the requirements to begin?**

Your child may be referred for services by his or her physician or therapist.