

Introduction to Occupational Therapy

What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a profession that promotes participation and independence in daily activities to improve the quality of life for clients and their families through the use of **occupations**.

What is an Occupation?

In OT, occupations are defined as any **meaningful** activity people do on a daily basis. This includes anything you need or want to do. There are 9 categories of occupations, which are:

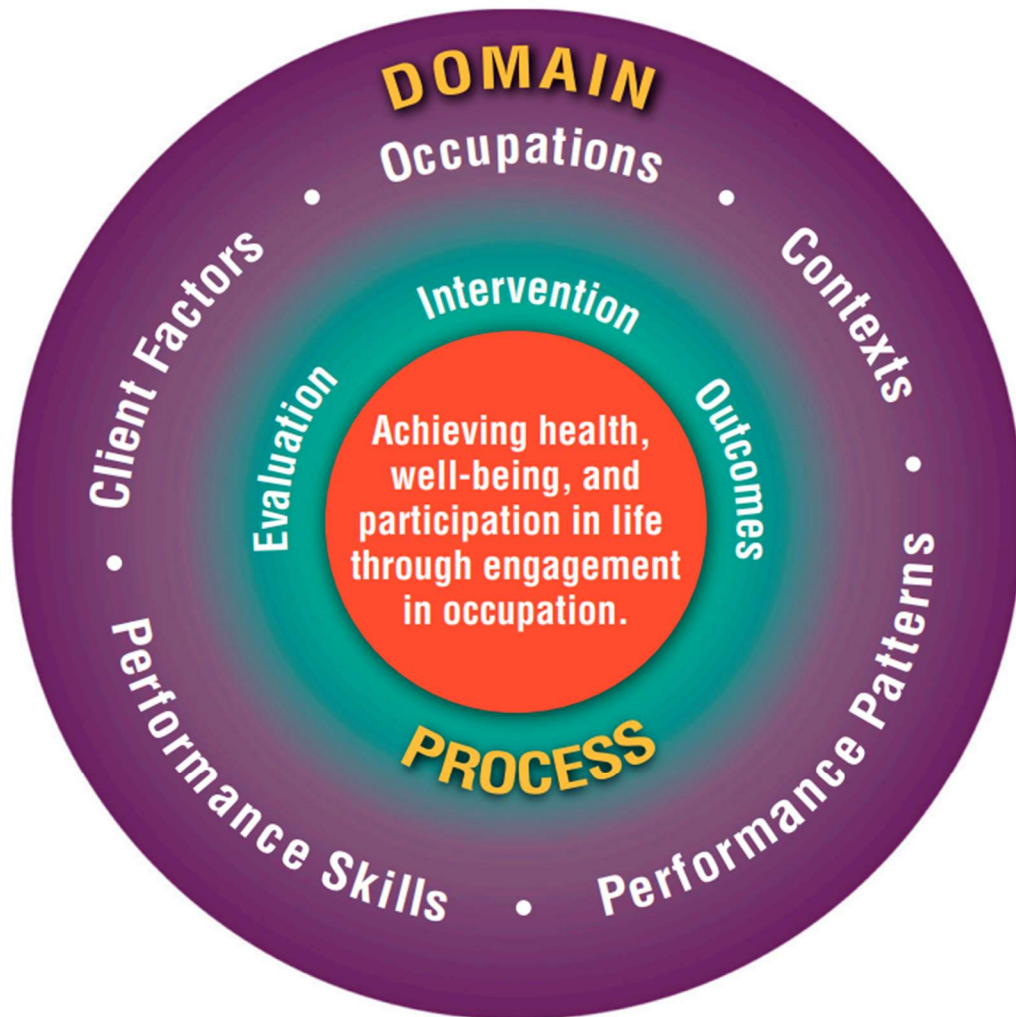
1. Activities of daily living (ADLs)- basic necessary tasks
2. Instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs)- more complex necessary tasks
3. Play
4. Education
5. Leisure
6. Work
7. Social participation
8. Health management
9. Rest/ Sleep

Goals & Scope of Practice for OT

OTs set individualized goals based on the strengths, deficits, and preferences of your child. OTs are trained to use a holistic approach by considering all components of a child, their context, and their environment.

The goals an OT sets may vary based on the setting. For example, a child who sees an occupational therapist in a school setting will receive goals that are specific to furthering their education, whereas other settings may have more flexibility with the type of goals they set.

Below is a diagram of the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework 4, which helps to define the scope of practice for OT:



Can My Child Benefit From OT?

Occupational therapists can benefit many children of all ages and abilities. Some examples of diagnoses that often benefit from OT services are:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ADHD
- Down syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy
- Learning disabilities

- Genetic Disorders

Some examples of skills or other topics that are often addressed in pediatric OT include:

- Fine motor skills
- Handwriting
- Sensory processing
- Emotional regulation
- Social skills
- Self-care skills
- Dressing
- Turn-taking
- Transitions
- Attention
- Cognition
- Balance
- Developmental milestones
- Reflex integration
- Following directions

How Do I Begin Receiving OT Services?

Talk to your Primary Healthcare Provider about a referral if you have any concerns you think occupational therapy may be able to address

Many insurance plans cover OT services, so check with your provider.

OT Process: What to Expect

If your child begins to receive OT services, this will likely begin with a detailed **initial evaluation**. During this time, your child may be given various assessments to determine where their strengths and deficits lie. Initial evaluations also often include parent/ caregiver interviews. Do not be afraid to ask questions! The OT scope of

practice is broad and holistic. Feel free to bring up any information, even if you are unsure of its relevance.

The next step will likely be **goal setting**. Your therapist will use the information from the evaluation to determine the goals, frequency, and duration of therapy tailored to your child's specific needs. Your child's OT will then provide individualized interventions aimed at helping your child meet their goals.

Your child's OT will periodically **re-evaluate** them to determine if their goals are being met. A re-evaluation will help determine if any goals need to be adjusted, removed, or added.

The duration of your child's therapy will depend on their progress and needs.