

# What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a diverse field of work where professionals help individuals become as independent as possible. This can include tasks such as dressing, bathing, feeding, & toileting, as well as social skills, play skills, attention, executive functioning skills, regulation, and motor coordination/control. OT practitioners work in a variety of settings, such as outpatient clinics, hospitals, and in the home. Whether a person is affected by a major injury or is born with different abilities, we are here to help.



## Regulation in OT:

OTs "work on increasing a child's ability to tolerate & integrate sensory input in order to adapt to daily environments and events" (p. 714). Occupational therapists work on sensory integration by creating a personalized sensory diet for children who have difficulties with sensory processing & regulation. Some of these strategies include jumping on the trampoline, spinning on swings, the use of weighted blankets or objects, and much more. "Better regulation will (...) impact the ability of the child to function more effectively in the world," including easier adaptation to new environments & routines and increased participation in school & other therapy disciplines (p. 712).

*Sensory Processing Challenges in Children*  
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# A Guide To Occupational Therapy



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## Interventions most used at TLC:

- Floor Time/Play
- Reflex Integration
- Sensory Integration
- Feeding
- Craniosacral

## Diagnoses most treated at TLC:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD/ADD)
- Developmental Delay
- Down Syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- Accident-Related Injuries
- Developmental Coordination Disorder

## Intervention:

- **Floor Time/Play:** Play is important for children to learn new skills needed for higher level learning. Through child-directed play, OTs assist with learning important skills such as sharing, taking turns, engagement, patience, frustration tolerance, & self-calming techniques.
- **Reflex Integration:** Residual reflexes can lead to difficulties with potty training, coordination, communication, posture, attention, & much more.
- **Sensory Integration:** The senses include sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, vestibular, & proprioception. Senses work together to give an accurate picture of who you are, where you are, & what is happening around you.
- **Feeding:** Sensory &/or motor difficulties can sometimes lead to picky eating. OTs assess the child's needs and help them expand their palate through food exploration & increased motor control.
- **Craniosacral:** The use of specialized manual techniques to help balance fluid found between the brain & spinal cord. Appropriate balance helps support the immune system & calms the body.

## What to look for:

- **Fine Motor:** Difficulties with holding a pencil, coloring or completing homework, using fasteners, tying shoes, or stringing beads.
- **Gross Motor:** Clumsiness, frequent tripping or falling, difficulties with catching & throwing, running, jumping, balance, timing, speed, or coordination.
- **Sensory Processing:** Hypo or hypersensitivity to stimuli affects interactions with others and their environment. This may include gravitational insecurity, consistent movement seeking, mouthing objects, avoiding certain textures or seeking out tactile input, poor body awareness, picky eating, sensitivity to smell, or easy overwhelm in busy or loud environments.
- **Behavioral Skills:** Difficulty taking turns in games or with toys, emotional outbursts, hitting, kicking, or biting.
- **Activities of Daily Living:** Difficulty with eating or daily routines (getting dressed/undressed, bathing, grooming, using the restroom, etc).
- **Cognition:** Difficulty with executive functions including problem solving, organization, planning, or attention.