

HOW DO I KNOW IF PEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MIGHT HELP?

A child's growth is certainly somewhat unique to them, yet there are also predictable milestones and critical periods in development. Sometimes a family can use a little help in supporting their child with organizational skills, self-regulation, fine and gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination, sensory processing and other milestones. The following are some developmental challenges that may indicate a child could benefit from pediatric occupational therapy:

GROSS MOTOR: (large motor movements)

- *Seems weaker than their peers*
- *Difficulty with hopping, jumping, skipping and/or running compared to peers*
- *Difficulty standing on one foot*
- *Appears stiff and awkward in their movements*
- *Clumsy, seems not to know how to move their body; bumps into things; falls out of chair*
- *Tendency to confuse right and left*
- *Reluctant in playground participation and sports; prefers more sedentary activities*

FINE MOTOR: (small motor movements)

- *Poor pencil grasp*
- *Poor desk posture-slumps; leans on arm; head too close to work; other hand does not hold paper*
- *Lines drawn are too light or too dark; wobbly lines; breaks pencil often*
- *Difficulty with coloring, drawing, copying, cutting; avoids these activities*
- *Difficulty with handwriting*
- *Dominant hand*

ACADEMIC:

- *Attention issues, distractible; difficulty completing work*
- *Slow response time*
- *Poor organization; difficulty sequencing*
- *Restless, fidgety; difficulty sitting still*
- *Difficulty following directions*

SENSORY PROCESSING:

Tactile-processing

- *Seems to withdraw from touch; dislikes being cuddled*
- *Does not like to get hands dirty or play with messy art media*
- *Does not cooperate for grooming activities*
- *Will only wear certain types of clothing*
- *Touches everything; struggles to keep hands to themselves*

Oral /Olfactory-processing

- *Picky eater; bothered by certain textures in food*
- *Likes to eat the same foods*
- *Does not try new foods*
- *Eats non-edible items*
- *Sensitive to certain smells*

Auditory-processing

- *Sensitive to household sounds*
- *Does not like crowds or noisy environments*
- *Sensitive to loud sounds such as fireworks, sirens, alarms*
- *Seems to talk excessively; likes to make loud sounds*
- *Has difficulty making themselves understood*
- *Has difficulty understanding directions*
- *Cannot repeat hand clapping sequence*

Visual-processing

- *Sensitive to light as compared to peers*
- *Easily distracted by visual stimuli*
- *Difficulty discriminating shapes, colors, and/or doing puzzles*
- *Eyes tire easily with reading*
- *Letter reversals after first grade*
- *Difficulty with visual tracking*

Vestibular-internal processing

- *Fearful of feet leaving the ground and activities moving through space*
- *Avoids going on playground equipment*
- *Avoids activities that challenge balance*
- *Constantly moving; cannot sit still*
- *Seeks movement*

- *Visual tracking difficulties*
- *Low muscle tone*
- *Difficulty moving both sides of the body together or in opposition*
- *Short attention span*
- *Difficulty with emotional regulation*

Proprioception

- *Clumsy, awkward, poor posture*
- *Does not seem to know where they are moving in space*
- *Overstuffs mouth with food*
- *Has low muscle tone*
- *Difficulty with touching finger to nose with eyes closed*

Modulation

- *Struggles to accept changes in routine*
- *Difficulty with transitions*
- *Easily frustrated*
- *Impulsive*
- *Acts out behaviorally; difficulty getting along with peers*
- *Marked mood variation; may have "meltdowns"*
- *Lacks self confidence; low self esteem*