

School Tips for Administrators & Educators



Occupational therapy practitioners can support all students, with or without disabilities, to achieve academic success and positive social participation. They help students engage in everyday activities or routines in schools to promote their health, safety, and learning. They provide modifications to activities and school environments such as playgrounds and classrooms so all children can fully participate in activities necessary for achievement. Occupational therapy practitioners collaborate with all school personnel—educators, administrators, paraeducators, and other support staff—to create a school climate conducive to learning and to promote appropriate school behavior.

Work With Students

- Recommend appropriate instructional and testing accommodations.
- Promote development of self-advocacy skills.
- Coach students in strategies necessary for organization of desk, locker, and backpack.
- Identify individual strengths and abilities of students at risk or with disabilities to build skills and self-esteem.
- Establish behavior modification programs.
- Support transition to different grade levels, community resources, and future goals.
- Develop a student's independence in daily living skills such as dressing and eating.
- Address sensory needs of students by analyzing lighting, noise levels, and cafeteria smells.
- Offer specific strategies and training directly to a student in special education to meet the individualized education program.

Work on Behalf of Students

- Promote universal design and modification of classrooms and playgrounds for accessibility.
- Arrange computer workstations according to ergonomic principles.
- Encourage whole classroom instruction to promote healthy lifestyle choices such as balance of work and play, importance of rest and sleep, and proper nutrition to enhance performance.
- Provide coaching on implementation of stress management or handwriting strategies.
- Address technology needs of all students in schools.
- Conduct in-services for families or educators about homework strategies to promote success.
- Provide early intervening and tiered interventions in general education as appropriate.

Promoting Proper Use of All School Materials

- Analyze backpack weight, size, and fit for health, posture, and comfort.
- Recommend assistive technology such as slant boards or a computer mouse for proper positioning and accessibility.
- Offer homework strategies to increase ease and decrease stress in completion.

Occupational therapy is a science-driven, evidence-based profession that enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health and prevent—or live better with—illness, injury, or disability.