**What is the AOTA Childhood Occupations Toolkit?**

Geared for the parent or caregiver, this early childhood collection (http://www.aota.org/en/About-Occupational-Therapy/Patients-Clients/ChildrenAndYouth.aspx) offers informative handouts that review tips and strategies for increasing a child’s ability to participate in daily activities or “occupations,” such as bath time and toileting. Several of the Tip Sheets are available in English and Spanish.

**Why are the AOTA Childhood Occupations Tip Sheets important?**

A child’s daily activities are completed within the unique culture and routines of the family, which makes these Tip Sheets valuable (Doll, 2014). When children are able to participate in daily activities, families and caregivers are more likely to be satisfied (Fingerhut, 2013).

**What is the distinct contribution of occupational therapy in promoting daily activities and routines?**

Occupational therapy (OT) practitioners are experts in evaluating and modifying components of activities and the environment so children and families can participate in daily routines. OT practitioners offer services that are proven to be effective for promoting a child’s ability to participate and engage in daily life activities (Case-Smith, 2013; Case-Smith, Frolek Clark, & Schlabach, 2013; Frolek Clark & Schlabach, 2013; Howe & Wang, 2013).

By sharing the toolkit Tip Sheets, OT practitioners can:

- Assume a lead role in team decision making for children’s services to promote occupation, inclusion, participation, and the value of families and routines
- Coach families and caregivers within their homes and communities about the value of participation
- Advocate for the value of activity and routines on behalf of children and families

**What is the research supporting occupation-based practices?**

- The family is integral for child participation in daily activities (World Health Organization, 2007).
- A “good fit” is required between the interests and capabilities of the child and their family (Coster et al., 2012).
- When the caregiver and child are mutually engaged, the child’s ability to participate in home, school, and community environments is optimized (Case-Smith, 2013).
- Positive outcomes in childhood occupations are observed when the caregiver is involved (Chiarello, Palisano, Bartlett, & McCoy, 2011; Danhauer, Coster, Tickle-Degnen, & Cermak, 2007; Priest, 2006).
Why should the occupational therapy practitioner share the Childhood Occupations Toolkit with other stakeholders?

**Stakeholder Group** | **Value**
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Families | Share the Tip Sheets through social media; start a conversation with OT professionals or pediatricians; and learn strategies to support success during everyday activities.
Other health care providers | Understand the role of OT in primary care teams in pediatrics: OT practitioners are “activity experts” who analyze everyday activities and offer solutions to increase an individual’s ability to participate in occupations.
Insurance companies | Clarify the distinct role of OT for reimbursement purposes.
Policymakers | Identify the distinct value of OT in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act for children and their families.

What is a recommended next step for the OT practitioner?

- Use the ideas above to share the toolkit and support children in establishing daily routines.
- Promote the ability for children and families to feel connected and accomplished during their daily activities.

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References


