

Support Occupational Therapy Practitioners in Schools

Note: Begin by explaining the role of occupational therapy in schools and how it supports students' ability to participate in their education. If you have experience working in or with schools, consider sharing one personal or clinical example.

Key Points

- **School-based occupational therapy practitioners are essential members of the education team.** They work closely with teachers, administrators, other specialized instructional support personnel (SISP), and families to help students succeed.
- **OT helps students build essential skills.** This includes things like self-regulation, executive functioning, problem-solving, and self-care skills that support learning and help students thrive.
- This year marks the **50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** and the **60th anniversary of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act**. these laws ensure every student with a disability has the opportunity to achieve success. OT plays a key role in making that vision a reality.
- **There is a severe workforce shortage** in K–12 schools. Schools are struggling to hire and keep specialized instructional support personnel, including OTPs.
- **OT is especially vulnerable due to stagnant wages and growing caseloads.** This makes recruitment and retention more difficult. Without targeted support through federal workforce programs, these shortages will worsen—limiting access to essential services for students who need them most.
- **There is strong bipartisan support to strengthen education and workforce development in FY26.** This will help to address shortages and ensure students have access to services like occupational therapy.

Your Ask:

Please support robust funding to address the OT workforce crisis and help ensure students receive the services they need to succeed.