OT Skills for Preschoolers

A child’s early stages of development are crucial in establishing the foundation for most latter skills. Occupational therapists are set in place to help promote development of these skills by engaging preschoolers in their daily routines. This is done by support of parents, teacher and staff to ensure that children have the greatest chance for success in all areas. Making sure that everyone involved is carrying out these skills and strategies to perform the child’s necessary developmental and functional skills is key. These involve the support and facilitation of social skills, play, motor development (fine and gross), adaptations, and self-care.

To make sure a child has room for success, we must meet them at their point of performance and facilitate full participation. The skills required to engage within their academic routine are functional grasp patterns that are utilized throughout the day for tasks such as dressing (button, zipper, snaps, shoe tying, etc.), hygiene (turn a sink on, pump soap, hold paper towel to dry hands), holding and manipulating classroom materials (crayons, markers, glue) and mealtime routines (utensil use, picking up finger foods, opening food/drink containers, etc.). Children also may have difficulty with motor planning for initiating and carrying out tasks or activities, organizing the body’s actions, body movement in space and sequencing to complete a specific task. For example, how to hold scissors, throwing a ball, climbing on a jungle gym, knowing to place socks on prior to shoes and how, etc. In addition, helping children tolerate a variety of sensory materials and activities to participate and engage in their daily routine successfully. Not only is it developing skills, it is also collaborating with teachers and parents to provide any modifications, adaptations and accommodations needed to achieve their goals.

Go to http://www.childmind.org/en/posts/articles/2012-8-14-occupational-therapy for more information on Occupational Therapy.

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