

## **Occupational Therapy**

The Occupational Therapist (OT) works as part of a team of professionals to help you with concerns about your child. The OT brings to the team knowledge of self-care, productivity, and play. The OT has a special interest in your child's self-help skills.

When assessing your child, the OT will discuss your concerns about your children's abilities; observe what they are able to do; and why some activities are difficult. The OT may assess the following areas:

### 1. Self-care

Does your child have difficulty in self-help skills such as feeding, toileting, dressing, and mobility?

The OT can assist with therapeutic techniques to assist your child to feed more easily, including choosing appropriate equipment such as adapted feeding utensils and other adaptive equipment.

### 2. Productivity

Does your child have difficulty with such skills as cutting with scissors, holding a pencil, manipulating objects, and learning new information?

Home, child care/early learning program and school settings can be tailored and modified to enable you to work on specific goals with your child such as memory, problem-solving, and coordination activities.

### 3. Play

Does your child have difficulty with play skills such as using toys appropriately, interacting with others, or displaying problem behaviours?

The OT can help by providing therapeutic and behavioural strategies for your child, promoting cooperative play skills, and appropriate toy use.

## **Physiotherapy**

The Physiotherapist (PT) works as part of a team of professionals available to help you with concerns about your child. The PT brings to the team knowledge of the normal development of movement. The PT has a special interest in your child's physical abilities such as rolling, crawling, sitting, walking, climbing and jumping, and will help your child to develop the movement skills necessary at each stage of development.

When assessing your child, the PT will discuss your concerns about your child's physical abilities; observe how your child moves, what he can do, and why some activities are difficult. The PT also assesses how your child's muscles feel (muscle tone), your child's balance, coordination, motor skills, and how well he functions in his everyday activities.

A physiotherapy plan may include, but is not limited to:

- Assessment and individual therapy
- Teaching you various ways to position and work with your child to develop muscle control, and improve movement
- Teaching you and your child activities to encourage independent movement
- Determining the need for equipment such as special seating, walkers, and standers

## **Speech-Language Services**

The Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) works as part of a team of professionals available to help you with concerns about your child's ability to communicate.

What are Speech and Language?

1. Speech refers to the actual physical part of communicating a message, such as:
  - Articulation - how your child produces sounds
  - Voice – the sound produced by the vocal chords
  - Fluency - how smoothly sounds, words and phrases flow together when speaking
2. Language is a code made up of rules that include what words mean, how to make words, how to put them together, and what word combinations are best in what situations. A child may have difficulty with receptive language (understanding of language) and/or expressive language (producing language).

A child might have difficulty in any of these areas, or difficulty with swallowing and feeding, which involves the motor control of the mouth, tongue and swallowing mechanisms.

An SLP can provide assessment of these areas, and will work with you to develop a plan of therapy to help your child. This plan might include:

- Direct individual therapy
- Therapy with a communication assistant, under the supervision of the Speech-Language Pathologist
- Activities for you to work with your child at home
- Consultation to your day care, preschool program, or school