



PRESENTATION

Occupational Therapy in the Schools

SPEAKER

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The focus of this presentation will be general
- not specific to programs/processes in the
United States.

There will be a lot of products mentioned and do it
yourself (DIY) ideas.

I always recommend trying a DIY technique first.
Then, if you wish, you can purchase a similar item.



Objectives

1. Increase awareness of modifications that may help a student with EDS/HSD during the school day
2. Help support those of you in the school settings to understand easy and inexpensive ways to help make life easier for a student with EDS/HSD
3. Educate students and families so that they can explore options with their school
4. Offer resources (this powerpoint is embedded to hyperlinks to products/ideas)

***This presentation is not comprehensive and you all have experiences and knowledge to continue to share to the EDS/HSD community of strategies that have worked for you! Please continue to share

The goals of an occupational therapist in the schools

1. Increase access and ability to participate with peers in the educational setting
2. Facilitate collaboration between school team: student, teachers, counselors, other therapists, nurse and outside providers and family
3. Improve joint protection, energy conservation, stability: NOT increase strength
 - Modification of equipment, schedule, and activities
 - Incorporation of: assistive technology and universal design
4. Educate about sensory processing, proprioception & interoception (temp sensitivity, pain, thirst)

Reasons for OT

There are several reasons an occupational therapist will provide direct or indirect support in the schools:

1. Fine motor integration (management of classroom materials)
2. Visual motor integration (handwriting)
3. Play and Leisure (physical education, recess, and extra- curricular)
4. Cognitive/Executive Function (including attention)
5. Self Regulation
6. Sensory Processing
7. Bilateral Integration (scissoring)
8. Mental Health/Social Participation



OTs can help school personnel and community partners assess and understand common co-occurring diagnoses/considerations in order to help support during the school day:

- ADHD
- POTs
- Convergence Insufficiency
- Anxiety/Depression
- GI
- Joint dislocation/subluxation, sprains, etc
- Fatigue
- Cognition & Learning
- Cardio & Neuro
- Sleep disorders
- Developmental Coordination Disorder
- Sensory Processing Disorder
- Autoimmune Considerations



A school based OT can support student's access and participation by teaching principles of energy conservation and using products to protect/stabilize joints

Energy Conservation – modifications or adaptations to how daily activities are carried out to minimize fatigue, strain, pain.

FOAM Tubing



Egg Style Pencil Grips



The Wright Stuff



EazyHold

2 PCS



GALAGEE-Big-Heavy-Weighted-Pens

Energy Conservation and Joint Protection, continued

Spring Activated Scissors



DIY Slant Board



Accessible features within computer systems, ergonomic mouse, and touch screen computers



Accessories sold separately.



SPIO (stabilizing pressure input orthosis)



rolling backpack

Energy Conservation and Joint Protection, continued



[glasses](#)



Reduce eye strain with screen filter,
glasses

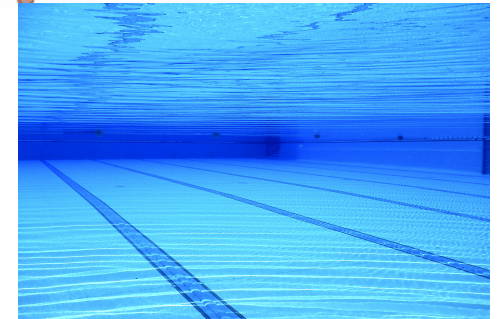
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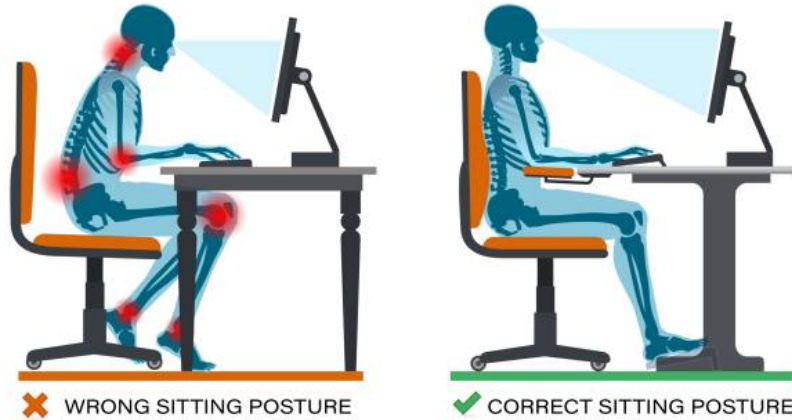
Work with school for schedule
modification (1/2 day: breaks):
hybrid or digital models



Collaborate with
outside providers,
doctors, and student
for sports/ physical
education
modifications



Occupational Therapists consult on flexible seating and ergonomics in schools



Not this:



The best chair allows the child's feet to touch the floor/stool, has arm rests (lateral support), has back and neck support).

There are many flexible seating options to help students change positions throughout the school day

Folding Chair

Hug Chair



Bean Bag Chair



Wall sit: I would like to see the computer raised up to minimize neck flexion and towel under knees to support tight hamstrings



Sensory Processing Supports in the Classroom



OTs can help students

- ~ identify what they may be over-responding to or not noticing at all
- ~ with modifications and accommodations to help support sensory processing

STAR Institute free checklist: <https://sensoryhealth.org/basic/symptoms-checklist>

School Toolkit for EDS/JHS: <https://theschooltoolkit.org/the-sensory-environment/>

Accommodations

SPD in school

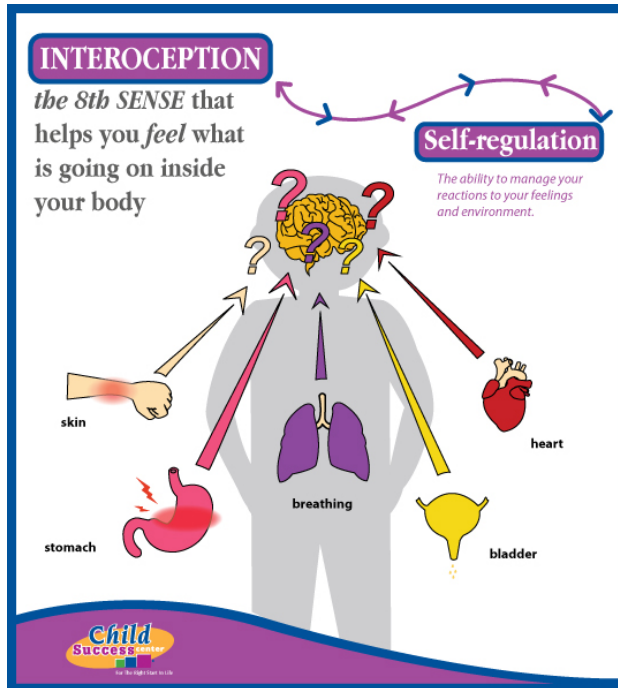


Support SPD in school



OTs can support student awareness of Interoception

Interoception

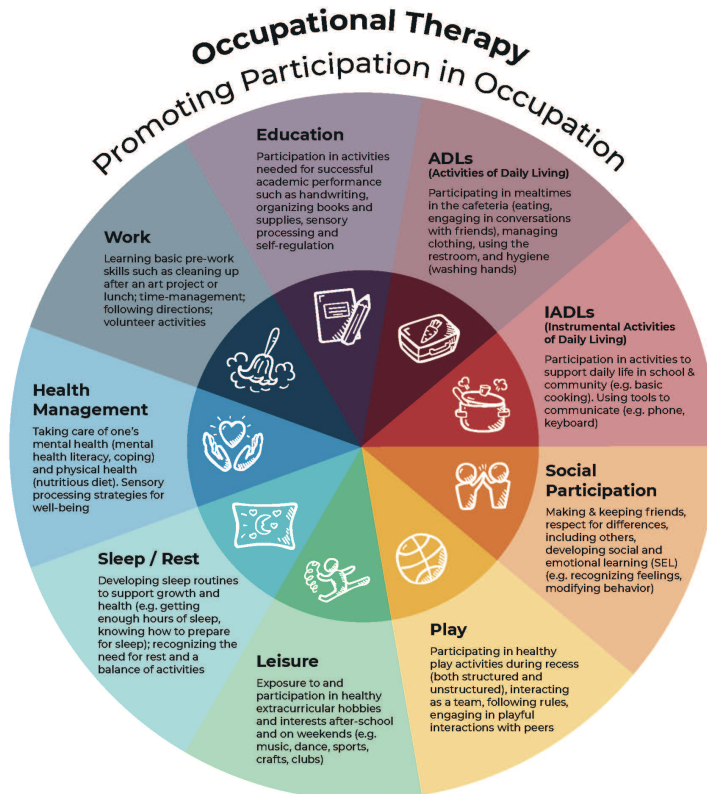


Kids who struggle with the **interoceptive** sense may have trouble knowing when they feel hungry, full, hot, cold or thirsty. Having trouble with this sense can also make self-regulation a challenge.

Occupational Therapists can provide a meaningful role in social participation and wellness in schools



Every Moment Counts



(2022) Bazyk, S.

*Occupational therapy practitioners ask,
"What matters to you?"
not, "What's the matter with you?"*

VIRGINIA "GINNY" STOFFEL

my OT SPOT



Thank you
for listening