School-Based Medicaid Occupational Therapy Services

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Occupational Therapy Definition

- “Practice of occupational therapy” means the therapeutic use of purposeful and meaningful occupations (goal-directed activities) to evaluate and treat individuals who have a disease or disorder, impairment, activity limitation, or participation restriction that interferes with their ability to function independently in daily life roles, and to promote health and wellness. KRS 319A.010

School-based Occupational Therapy

- An occupational therapist (OT) uses his/her expertise to help children be prepared for and perform school-related activities.
- In the school setting, OT supports academic outcomes (e.g., math, reading, and writing), non-academic outcomes (e.g., social skills and self-help skills), and extracurricular activities (e.g., recess and participation in sports).

Role of OT's in Educational Settings

- Collaboration with others to:
  - Assess/evaluate students
  - Interpret results
  - Assist in the development of the IEP
  - Provide direct and consultative services to students
  - Work closely with educational staff and parents
  - Supports learning in the least restrictive environment

Billable OT Services

- Assessment
  - Activities of Daily Living (related to school function)
  - Sensory or perceptual motor development
  - Neuromotor function (balance, coordination, muscle tone, postural control, reflexes, developmental stages)
  - Musculo-skeletal function (muscle strength, range of motion, endurance
  - Gross and fine motor function
  - Adaptive equipment assessment (assistive devices)

Occupational Therapy Evaluations

- Observation in the school environment
- Analysis of student work samples
- Interview teachers and parents
- Assess student's motor and praxis skills (range of motion, muscle strength, coordination, and motor planning), sensory processing skills, visual perceptual skills, self-help skills (eating, dressing required at school)

Occupational Therapy Evaluations

- Contributing factors for written output
  - Posture in classroom furniture
  - Shoulder/wrist stability
  - Hand/arch development
  - Pencil grasp
  - Handwriting skills (copy, compose, placement, spacing)
  - Standardized Handwriting Assessment

Occupational Therapy Evaluations

- Describe difficulties that result from medical diagnosis
- Compile list of strengths
- Compile list of relative weaknesses
- Discuss relevance of findings to educational concerns
- Recommendations for services are **not** included in the OT report

Billable OT Services

- Treatment
  - Activities of daily living (feeding, dressing, hygiene)
  - Sensory or perceptual motor skills
  - Neuromotor function (balance, coordination)
  - Musculo-skeletal function (strengthening, range of motion, endurance
  - Gross and fine motor development
  - Adaptive equipment needs (design, selection, fabrication, use)

Non-billable OT Services in Schools

- Assist school administrators in planning and implementation issues (e.g., access to programs and facilities, building modifications, special transportation, curriculum development, safety and injury prevention, and technology).

Role of OT in Providing Effective Therapy Services

- Training parents and school staff in activities and accommodations
- Observe and critically analyze student performance and responses that prevent the student benefiting from his/her education program
- Identify, select, and adapt special materials and equipment to enhance the student's benefit

Role of Occupational Therapists, cont.

- Identify and optimize natural opportunities for embedding skills during daily routines
- Collaborate and coordinate with teacher and families for needed change in instructional strategies and learning environment
- Suggest accommodations, modifications, and problem solving to promote student success.

Research-Based Interventions

- OT's are not usually members of school RTI teams, but may be contacted by a building representative for recommendations
- OT's may become involved with problem-solving process
- Therapists may be able to provide teachers with training that includes strategies for making simple changes in the classroom environment and improving student performance

Examples of Interventions

- Poor pencil use- suggest pencil grips, adapted paper, use of templates
- Cannot stay in seat- fidgety- suggest movement breaks, adjust seat to correct height
- Poor cutting skills- recommend looped scissors, stabilize paper

Examples of Training Modules

- How to develop pre-pencil hand skills
- Successful handwriting programs
- Pencil adaptation
- Simple strategies to improve scissor skills
- Short sensory activities to embed in the classroom
- Adapting the classroom environment (reduce distractions, alternate positions).

OT's Input for IEP Development

- Present Level Statements
- Goals are not always discipline specific
- Specially Designed Instruction
- Supplementary Aids and Services
- Program Modifications and Supports for School Personnel

SDI Relevant to OT

- “Instruction in…….”
- Range of motion activities
- Upper extremity strengthening activities
- Sensory motor strategies
- Motor planning strategies
- Facilitation of postural control
- Fine motor facilitation
- Visual perceptual motor strategies

Supplementary Aids and Services

- Sensory equipment such as weighted garment, move and sit cushion, therapy ball
- Fine Motor/Visual Perceptual Motor Devices such as easel, pencil grip, adapted writing paper
- Self-help devices such as adapted eating utensils, zipper pull, Velcro closures
- Positioning devices such as supported seating with boundaries, foot rests

Program Modifications/Supports for School Personnel

- Train staff to use:
  - Adapted equipment
  - Sensory schedules
  - Movement activities
  - Range of Motion Activities
  - Fine Motor Activities
  - Strengthening Activities

Determine Need for OT Services

- Is there a medical necessity to receive OT services at school?
- Does the motor, sensory or self-help challenge significantly interfere with the student's ability to participate in school activities?
- Have research-based instruction and intervention services successfully alleviated the concern?

Determine Need for OT Services

- Can the student's deficit areas be managed by the team without the expertise of the OT?
- Does the student show potential to steadily progress without OT services?
- Can the student's deficit areas be managed through classroom accommodations and/or modifications?

Documenting Medicaid OT Services

- Conference Summary
  - Medicaid Section
    - Annual written notice provided to parent
    - Collateral service provision

ICD 9 Codes

- Any medical diagnosis
  - Cerebral Palsy
  - Down Syndrome
  - Autism
  - Spina Bifida
  - Developmental Delay
  - Central Nervous System Dysfunction
  - Functional Mental Disability
  - Traumatic Brain Injury

Medicaid Documentation

- Date of service
- Type of service (individual treatment, group therapy, collateral, evaluation)
- Group size
- Minutes of service
- Diagnosis code
- Start and end times
- Note- describes the student's response to treatment