

Occupational Therapy

This therapy helps children develop appropriate social, play, and learning skills. The therapist aids the child in achieving normal daily tasks (e.g., getting dressed and playing with other children). Occupational therapists may use aspects of *sensory integration therapy* in order to help the child appropriately respond to and organize information coming through the senses.

Occupational therapy (OT) provides interventions to help children develop appropriate social, play and learning skills. The therapist also aids the child in achieving daily tasks such as getting dressed and interacting with other children. Occupational therapists utilize play activities in order to teach the aforementioned skills.

Children with autism may also have trouble processing information they see, smell, hear, taste and touch. For most children sensory integration is a part of the growth process and occurs naturally without help. Children with autism sometimes respond too little or too much to certain types of sensory input. For example, a child may never respond to his or her name, but throws a tantrum when they hear a particular sound, like a siren or vacuum cleaner. An occupational therapist can use principles of *sensory integration* to address these issues to allow the child to better process sensory information. The central idea of sensory integration therapy is to provide and control the sensory information presented to the child. Therapists provide input from vestibular/balance systems, muscles joints and skin in such a way that the child forms an adaptive response spontaneously. Therapy is most effective when the child directs his own action while therapist directs the environment.