

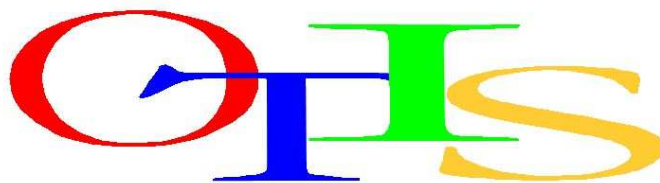
Ask OTIS: Using the *OT Practice Framework* to Guide Evaluations

Q: The OTs in my school district are trying to align our evaluations with the OT Practice Framework but we're still primarily using assessments that look at underlying factors and our evaluation report template is broken down into specific skill areas such as handwriting, fine and gross motor skills, and stability/posture. How do you suggest we go about making changes to our evaluations so that they are based on the Framework and how should we adjust the way we write our reports?

As you consider how to conduct an evaluation using the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework* (AOTA, 2002), begin by reviewing the *Framework* and incorporating the language of the *Framework* into your evaluation reports. Relate current concerns to engagement in occupations at school such as completing written classroom and homework assignments or playing on the playground (instead of concerns about handwriting, fine motor skills and gross motor skills). Using *Framework* terminology can also help prepare you to shift the focus of your evaluations from component skills to performance and participation.

The next step is to start including an occupational profile as part of the evaluation process. The occupational profile describes the client's occupational history and identifies the client's concerns and priorities regarding engaging in occupations. Do observations in multiple contexts to identify the areas of occupation that are successful and those that are causing problems or risks. Remember to consider how context and activity demands support or interfere with occupational performance. Use the information gathered in the occupational profile to guide your selection of evaluation tools. Select specific assessments only if more information is needed. For example, if your observation of a child on the playground raises questions about his or her sensory processing, you may want to use the *Sensory Profile* to gather more specific information about that area of functioning. Also consider using assessments that emphasize performance and participation such as the Children's Assessment of Participation and Enjoyment (CAPE), the Preferences for Activities of Children (PAC), The Perceived Efficacy and Goal Setting System (PEGS), the Pediatric Evaluation of Disability Inventory (PEDI), and the School Function Assessment (SFA).

As you bring more aspects of the *Framework* into your evaluation process, you may find that you need to make some changes to the format of your report. You may find that some of the information you gather for the occupational profile fits naturally within your existing report format while others might be easier to include if you renamed and/or reorganized some of the sections of your report. For example, the questions regarding who the client is and why the client is seeking service relate directly to the "reason for referral" and the occupational history could fit within the "background information" section. However you might want to add an "occupational profile" section that discusses what contexts support or inhibit engagement and



identifies client priorities and desired targeted outcomes. You might also want to reorganize the discussion section of your report by dividing it into sections that address performance in areas of occupation (such as activities of daily living, education, and play) rather than sections focused on component skills (such as handwriting, gross motor skills and stability/posture).

References and Resources: The *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process* was published in the November/December, 2002 issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* and can be purchased as a separate document from AOTA. Some additional resources include the Core Session of the AOTA Online Course *Occupational Therapy in School-Based Practice: Contemporary Issues and Trends*, edited by Yvonne Swinth; the September 2002 *School System Special Interest Section Quarterly* (Applying the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework to the 0 to 21 Population in Education-Based Settings); and the AOTA CE article *Introduction to the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process* by Mary Jane Youngstrom (September 2002).

This article was written by Dottie Handley-More, Yvonne Swinth, and Sara Woodward, OTIS Co-Chairs. It originally appeared in the WOTA Newsletter in October, 2005 (Volume 63, Number 5 pp. 4-5).

OTIS (Occupational Therapists In Schools) is a standing committee for the Washington Occupational Therapy Association (WOTA) that was set up to help support therapists in school-based practice.