

## What Do PTs Do in Our Schools?

- ◆ Work with students directly on motor and safety skills to improve mobility and independence
- ◆ Work with staff to facilitate the student's participation in class activities and ensure staff safety
- ◆ Work to assist students' access to their curriculum, extra curricular activities, their classroom, bus, school and school grounds
- ◆ Consult for facility planning and transition planning (work sites, community access and plans for after graduation)

PTs also work to improve schools, programs & LEAs by:

- ◇ Identifying & addressing architectural barriers
- ◇ Assist with planning for modifications & new construction
- ◇ Problem solve & train with transportation
- ◇ Promote interaction with peers
- ◇ Consult on recreational areas & opportunities
- ◇ Assist with development & training for safety & prevention policies, activities & procedures (e.g. evacuation, good body mechanics, health promotion)
- ◇ Suggest general environmental modification to promote independence and sound ergonomics
- ◇ Serve as a resource to all educational staff, task forces and teams



## Physical Therapy in



IDEA defines the components of the IEP process, including referral, evaluation, reevaluation, eligibility determination for special education, creation of measurable goals, and identification of services needed to meet a student's goals.

### REFERRAL

⇒ EVALUATION

⇒ ELIGIBILITY

⇒ INDIVIDUAL PLAN (with goals)

⇒ SERVICES (what & where)

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# School-based Physical Therapy



Public Schools of North Carolina  
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

Adapted from:  
Providing Physical Therapy under IDEA



# School-based Physical Therapy supporting Students with Disabilities in North Carolina

## Physical Therapy and IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 108-446) is a federal law, with state education agency oversight, that supports the provision of public education for all children—regardless of the nature or severity of their disability. Part B of IDEA mandates the education of children, 3-21 years old, who have a disability that interferes with their educational performance and their ability to benefit from their educational program.



## IDEA Implementation

- Children with disabilities are entitled to a free, appropriate public education.
- Special education and related services are provided, as necessary, to meet the unique needs of each child.
- “Special education” means specialized instruction linked to a measurable annual goal.
- Special education and related services are to be provided in the least restrictive environment.
- IDEA, in conjunction with such other legislative mandates as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act, provides appropriate school-based services for children.
- Implementation of IDEA, Part B is the responsibility of each local education agency or school district.



## Physical Therapy: A Related Service

- ⇒ Physical therapy is one of many related services under Part B of IDEA.
- ⇒ Physical therapy is provided to support the student goals established in his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- ⇒ Physical therapists work collaboratively with a student’s IEP team, other educational personnel & staff to reach goals, promote independence and participation.
- ⇒ PTs participate in screening, evaluation, program planning & intervention to address educational needs from their expertise. To achieve student IEP goals, this may include:
  - working with students and their peers
  - teaching & training family & education personnel
  - measurement & documentation of progress,
  - providing consultation for access, equipment & safety
  - offer expertise to address challenges as they occur
- ⇒ Physical therapists assist students to access school environments, participate throughout the school day & benefit from their educational program.

## How Are PT Services Determined?

Any student that is eligible for special education is also eligible for all related services. Students receive PT and other related services when his/her IEP team determines that service is required to meet the established IEP goals. The IEP team includes the student, the parent (s) or family, administrators, teachers & when indicated, the physical therapist.

The IEP develops each IEP by:

- ⇒ identifying the student’s strengths & needs
- ⇒ setting measurable goals
- ⇒ determining the resources, including physical therapy, needed to meet a goal
- ⇒ decides the frequency, duration, location, & specific criteria for all services, including physical therapy services
- ⇒ ensures the student is educated with peers without disabilities to the maximum extent possible

