

PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES: PRACTICE IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS HOD P06-95-14-03 [Amended HOD 06-89-40-85; HOD 06-80-09-27; Initial HOD 06-79-14-38] [Position]

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) supports the provision of physical therapy services to children with special needs. Physical therapists have provided services to children with disabilities throughout the history of the profession. Public Law 94-142 (PL 94-142) provided the opportunity for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to be actively involved in providing services to children with disabilities in educational programs. Public Law 99-457 (PL 99-457; reauthorized as PL 108-446) extended this involvement to early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Physical therapists examine and evaluate children having a variety of sensory and motor disabilities. Physical therapists plan and implement programs that will help these children attain their optimal educational potential and benefit from special education. Physical therapists should assume a role in the development of a child's Individual Educational Program (IEP), or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), and make recommendations for increasing a child's ability to participate in educational activities. In addition, physical therapists contribute unique administrative, consultative, management, and teaching skills that help modify the educational environment so that children may benefit from their educational placement.

APTA encourages the establishment of working relationships with state education departments, local school districts and other agencies, such as mental health agencies, in order to integrate physical therapy services into school systems and early intervention programs. Such cooperation should be directed toward developing and implementing cost-effective delivery of services to children with disabilities within the framework of federally approved state plans. In all these efforts, the primary goal should be identifying and serving the best interests of children with disabling conditions both within the school setting and in overall quality of life.

Relationship to Vision 2020: Practitioner of Choice; (Practice Department, ext 3176)

Explanation of Reference Numbers:

BOD P00-00-00-00 stands for Board of Directors/month/year/page/vote in the Board of Directors Minutes; the "P" indicates that it is a position (see below). For example, BOD P11-97-06-18 means that this position can be found in the November 1997 Board of Directors minutes on Page 6 and that it was Vote 18.

P: Position | S: Standard | G: Guideline | Y: Policy | R: Procedure