

Guiding Practices for Physical Therapy in the School System

Physical Therapy means a continuum of services provided by a licensed physical therapist or a licensed and supervised physical therapy assistant. School-based physical therapy services are provided to develop and maintain performance levels, within an individual student's physical capabilities, for independent and safe access to educationally related activities.

This may include the following areas:

- Development and maintenance of student's functional mobility and ability to participate in and benefit from his/her special education program
- Modification and adaptation of the student's physical environment
- Provision of in-service training for school personnel for assistive devices or equipment used by the special needs child
- Communication and/or education of the student's teachers and family
- Communication with state and community agencies
- Involvement in total program planning or children with disabilities, including transition planning

School based physical therapy is a related service, and is provided only as required to assist a child in accessing their academic environment. This determination in the schools is made by a team of individuals that meet and review concerns as a group to determine if a child has a qualifying diagnosis and if the child is not able to access their environment without the help of a Physical Therapist. If the child can access their academic environment and does not need PT services in the school it does mean that they would not qualify for PT services in a private setting. It is the parent's right to access PT outside of school for the child if there are motor concerns that are not school related.