

Occupational therapy screening tool

Red flags

We understand it is challenging to see your child struggle, whether at school, at home or in the community. The following “red flags” may help identify if occupational therapy could benefit your child.

Call today to schedule an evaluation.

Children — All ages

- Avoids touching or being touched (especially if unexpected), dislikes getting dirty, seems unaware of pain, and/or displays upset with daily routine tasks such as dressing, bathing, washing hair, cutting nails, etc.
- Covers ears, becomes upset, or complains about loud noises
- Avoids movement activities such as swings, slides; hesitates on curbs or uneven surfaces, etc.
- Difficulty imitating actions
- Seems clumsy or uncoordinated (taking longer than expected to learn motor skills, bumps into other people or objects in the environment, falls often, etc.)
- Difficulty following verbal directions or completing steps of daily routines
- Appears to be in constant motion, fidgety, difficult time sitting still
- Unsafe in community or at home
- Poor eye contact or difficulty interacting with adults/peers
- Limited diet (does not eat certain food textures or temperatures, gags on food, etc.)
- Overly rough when playing
- Disruptive behaviors, impulsive, limited attention, resistive to new activities/changes in routine, difficulty moving from one activity to another, gives up easily, difficulty calming self

Red flags — Age-specific

0-1 year olds

- Not mouthing toys, difficulty transitioning to textured foods
- Difficulty eye tracking movement (decreased visual regard for toys and/or people)
- Does not appear interested in cause and effect toys
- Always content to lie/sit in one place
- Not imitating sounds, gestures, emotions, etc.
- Difficulty getting to sleep, easily awakened
- Takes a long time to respond even to familiar voices or startles easily
- Delayed head control (fully developed 4-5 mos.)
- Frequent irritability with difficulty calming
- Withdraws/fussy to or with touch (examples: changing diaper or clothes, bath time, wiping face).
- Resists being held, becomes upset when moved, when placed on back for diaper changes, etc.

2-3 year olds

- No enjoyment of rough and tumble play
- No interest or difficulty scribbling, completing 4-5 piece puzzles, building, etc.
- Not able to engage in parallel play (beside a peer); snatching toys from others typical at this age
- No observation of using toys as agents (doll feeding self, dump truck scooping sand)
- Not asking who, what, where, why questions
- Not able to locate parts of body (eyes, nose, etc.)

***Should be able to engage in quiet play approximately 15 minutes**

1-2 year olds

- No interest in engaging with moving toys (balls, cars/trucks, pull toys)
- Not attempting to feed self with spoon
- Does not use trial and error (example: attempts something once and gives up)
- Does not appear to use gestures and words to communicate wants and needs (limited pointing, showing, offering)
- Limited exploration of environment (not climbing on/off chairs, going up/down steps, etc.)
- Refuses or unable to eat same meals as rest of family
- Unable to use utensils/will only eat with hands
- Unable to use straw cup or sippy cup
- No pretend or cooperative play observed (examples — hide and seek, chasing, brushing dolls' hair, etc.)

***By 2 years should be able to engage in quiet play approximately 5-10 minutes**

3-4 year olds

- Not enjoying new toys, appears stuck on familiar or desired toys
- Limited interest in tools/activities such as hammering, using scissors and markers, sorting objects, etc.
- Unable to use one toy/object to represent something else
- No interest in peer play, unable to engage in cooperative play

***Now able to play with single object or play theme approximately 10 minutes, quiet play approximately 30 minutes**