



## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Starting Your Child in Occupational Therapy

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### **1. Are referrals required?**

A referral is not required. However, it may be helpful if you choose to file for insurance.

### **2. What is an OT evaluation and what is involved?**

OT evaluations are a series of standardized tests and clinical observations that are compiled into a report. The specific tests and observations used are based on the child's presenting areas of need. This will generally include two testing sessions of 1.5 hours each and/or observation directly with your child in our clinic. Additional testing time or additional observation at the school site may be needed. Test scores and observations are interpreted within the context of the initial concerns expressed by parents and professionals and also the information gathered about the child's functioning in other developmental areas. Then, an evaluation report is written, and a parent conference is scheduled to discuss the findings and recommendations.

### **3. How are regular ongoing OT appointments scheduled?**

Each child is scheduled for a regular, weekly or semi-weekly basis with a therapist whose schedule matches, as closely as possible, the times requested by the family. Because after-school sessions are so popular, there may be a waiting period for those times. If a child's parents accept a temporary, less optimal time for their sessions, the child can remain on the wait list until a more convenient time becomes available. Advanced cancellation of appointments and/or scheduling of makeup sessions are made directly with the therapist on a

week-to-week basis. Therapists will make every effort to provide makeup sessions, but it will depend on both the child and therapist's availability.

#### **4. How frequent and long are the therapy sessions, if recommended?**

In most cases, children come once a week for a 50-minute session. Occasionally, shorter, longer or twice weekly sessions may be recommended, based on the individual child's needs and progress.

#### **5. What are the fees for evaluations and individual therapy sessions?**

Professional OT evaluations are \$900 and require at least two appointments. Regularly scheduled weekly therapy sessions are \$160.

#### **6. How and when are payments made for therapy services?**

For evaluations, we ask parents to pay half of the fee at the initial appointment and the balance at the second appointment. When additional services are agreed upon during the course of the evaluation, those fees are also paid at the time of service. For regularly scheduled therapy sessions, we ask families to pay at the time of service.

#### *Discount Option:*

When families choose to pay in advance for four or more weeks of therapy, the fee is reduced by \$5.00 for each prepaid session. Fees for ongoing therapy and other services may be found in the Introduction Letter on the website. We accept check, cash or direct bank deposits. Individual payments can be given to the treating therapist or mailed to the clinic. Please make checks payable to "PlaySteps."

#### **7. Do you take insurance?**

We are not able to take insurance claims directly, but many of our families obtain a partial reimbursement from their insurance companies. To do so, you will need to file a claim with your insurance company. During the first week of each calendar month, we will give you an invoice for the services provided the previous month. This invoice will include the diagnostic and treatment codes needed to submit a claim. You will have already paid for the services outlined on the invoice, but this will provide the documentation you need for submitting a claim to your insurance company or flexible spending plan if you wish.

#### **8. What is your cancellation policy?**

We maintain a 24-hour cancellation policy. Unless an appointment is cancelled 24 hours in advance, it will be charged as scheduled. We do make an exception if the child who has the therapy appointment is ill, as long as you notify us as soon as you know that the child is ill. We recognize that there are other times when late cancellations are unavoidable, but we do save this time exclusively for the child and appreciate the understanding of our families that we must bill for it.

#### **9. Are parents required to be present during the session?**

Parents are not required to be present during the session. However, depending on the child's needs, it may be advantageous to participate in the session. Parents may also sit in on sessions for observation. This is particularly useful while developing the child's home program. This can be decided through discussion with the treating therapist.

**10. May I bring my other children to evaluations or therapy appointments?**

There is a small waiting room for parents, guardians, and other children. For evaluations and therapy appointments, it is typically preferred for the therapist to meet with your child without siblings present to prevent distractions.

**11. How will I know what my child did in his/her session?**

At the end of each session, there is time for the therapist to discuss the session with the caregiver. During that time the activities, successes and challenges are discussed, and suggestions for home are provided. If parents would like additional information, telephone messages, calls, as well as scheduled parent conferences, are also options.

**12. Will I be given activities to work on at home?**

Yes! With follow-through at home to work on the areas of need addressed in OT, we will see much faster progress in meeting our goals.

**13. How long do children typically continue in OT?**

This, of course, depends on the child's needs. Most children are in OT for six months to a year or more.

**14. How will we know when my child is ready to graduate from OT?**

When to end the therapy program is usually a decision made jointly by therapist and parents. When it appears that therapy is no longer needed, or when progress seems to have reached a plateau, we work with parents to form a termination plan that is comfortable for the child. Recommendations to discontinue therapy may be based on retesting, or more informal assessment methods. A discharge summary will be written, if requested, which summarizes the child's therapy program and current development.

**15. Do you provide group therapy at PlaySteps?**

We run small groups when there is sufficient interest and schedules can be synched. Our groups focus on social skills, sensory and emotional regulation, handwriting, or eating/problem feeding.

**16. Do you provide therapy for feeding issues such as "picky eating" at PlaySteps?**

Yes, if there are concerns for picky eating brought up by parents or during the evaluation, therapists at PlaySteps can provide "food school" sessions with your child.

**17. What is the next step to get started with therapy at PlaySteps for my child?**

Please complete the Pre-consultation Form on the "Getting Started" tab on our website. Forms may be submitted via email, fax, mail or drop-off. Our Director will contact you shortly thereafter for a free 30-minute consultation regarding your child's needs, and then make recommendations regarding the assessment process. If assessment is recommended, the next step is to complete the registration forms also available on our "Getting Started" tab on our website. If you have reports from other professionals or your child has an IEP (individualized education program), these will be helpful as well. Once we have the completed forms, we can move forward with scheduling an evaluation. If your child has had a recent OT evaluation elsewhere we may be able to get started without an additional assessment. Once we have read the report we can decide what may or may not be needed to start therapy sessions.