

Developmental Problems in Children



A child with delayed development may not show behaviors and abilities that are typical of the child's age. A child may have difficulty swallowing, sucking, and chewing; developing coordinated tongue movements for speech; achieving independence in feeding, dressing, and using the bathroom; understanding relationships between people, objects, time, and space; and developing problem-solving and coping strategies.

Occupational therapists who work with children are knowledgeable about stages of development and the appropriate milestones in a child's physical, mental, and behavioral development.

What can an occupational therapist do?

- **Evaluate** the child's level of performance in critical developmental areas.
- **Observe** the child's home and school environment and determine how it may be modified to promote better development.
- **Develop** a plan of treatment in coordination with other health care professionals who are treating the child.

- **Develop** age-appropriate self-care routines and habits, play skills, and social skills.
- **Recommend** adaptive equipment to facilitate the development of age-appropriate abilities.

What can parents and families do?

- **Stay educated** about and involved in the child's treatment plan.
- **Follow up** with the treating occupational therapist and health professionals to encourage further development and track progress.

Need more information?

Children of all ages can be affected by developmental delays; such children can often benefit from occupational therapy. If you would like to consult an occupational therapist, your physician, other health professionals, and your school district's director of special education may have information on how you can access an occupational therapist in your area.

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are trained to help people of all ages with a broad range of physical, developmental, and behavioral health conditions.

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