

SETTING UP A SPECIALIZED CLASSROOM: RELATED TO EQUIPMENT

How can an occupational therapist (OT) support your class?

The Occupational Therapists (OTs) offer a consultative, needs-based approach to provide recommendations for occupational therapy specific needs. OTs address concerns regarding self-help and play skills, fine motor and written output needs, sensory needs, and accessibility. OTs can also provide funding requests for Special Equipment Amount (SEA) to meet student's individualized OT-related goals, in order to participate in or access the curriculum. OTs can also help address safety concerns related to OT goals such as bathroom equipment, seating, and sensory components. For behaviour related safety concerns, the school team is encouraged to consult with their school board's Behaviour Team/ABA supports.

What kind of equipment could an OT provide a recommendation for?

Equipment should be client-specific, to meet an identified therapeutic purpose/goal. Some examples may include:

- Customized items that are specifically evaluated for a student
 - Example: Specialized chair due to postural needs and/or desk
- Activity of Daily Living (ADL) supports
 - Example: bathroom accessibility equipment to meet individual needs: such as change table, toilet safety frame and/or specialized toilet seat
- Technology related to OT identified goals
- Specific sensory equipment and fine motor tools to help meet OT identified goals

What kind of equipment would OTs recommend for the school to purchase to setup their specialized classrooms following a universal approach?

Items that may meet the general needs of **all** students, such as:

- Classroom furniture:
 - Cubicles/room dividers
 - Height-adjustable tables and desks to promote ideal 90-90-90 posture (see image)
 - Safe, adequate storage options for student's supplies
 - Rolling stools for school staff when working with students



90-90-90 Rule

- Variety of seating options:
 - Bean bags (for calming corner)
 - Cube chairs (ideal for dressing)
 - Gliders/rockers (for students that seek out movement)
- Classroom supplies:
 - Variety of colouring and writing utensils (paint crayons, thick/short Pip Squeaks markers, cone crayons, golf-sized pencils, primary pencils), wikky stix (to outline colouring images), variety of scissors (i.e. loop scissors, tension control scissors, table-top scissors), adaptive paper for printing, cardstock and construction paper for cutting activities, Velcro (e.g. to create visual schedules), page protectors and dry-erase markers (e.g. to insert worksheets)
 - Non-slip material (for under plates/bowls; for seat to prevent sliding)
- Classroom management suggestions:
 - Visual schedules, visual timers, Apps (such as ASD tools)
- Play and self-help development tools:
 - Fine motor and concept knowledge tools: cause-effect toys, building blocks of varied sizes, form board puzzles, latch boards, clothing fastener skill boards, games with tongs/tweezers (see image)
- Multi-sensory printing tools: Magnetic Drawing Board, Boogie Board, sand trays, small chalkboards, dry-erase boards, play dough, Apps (e.g. Writing Wizard, Letter School, Finger Paint with Sounds)
- Sensory equipment:
 - Tactile sensory bin: Kinetic Sand, Floam, etc.
 - Variety of fidgets
 - Visually stimulating toys: i.e. light-up toys, spinning toys
 - Light filters to reduce visual disturbances
 - Calming corner/center: tent/teepee/bean bag chair/cushions/bubble tube/mirrors
 - Noise-cancelling headphones/earmuffs
 - Movement cushions, bouncy bands, wobble stools, or other straight-forward, flexible seating options
 - Tactile path/river stones/rocking bowl
 - Variety of oral sensory items – Chewelry, pencil toppers, etc.
 - Small weighted items – lap pad, weighted animal
 - *weighted blankets should include OT involvement for safety*



- Safety equipment:
 - Helmets, mats - *school should consult with Behaviour Team/ABA supports

*While many of these items would be beneficial for the school to purchase to set up their specialized classroom, some of these items may also be recommended by an OT if needed to address specific occupational therapy goals for a client on caseload that continues to have functional difficulties despite a universal classroom set-up. Please contact your OT if you require help finding resources/suppliers.

Where can the school purchase these types of equipment?

This equipment is available through a variety of retailers, and may also be found online. Some examples may include:

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| • Amazon | • FDMT | • Special Needs | • Louise, Kool & Gait |
| • School specialty | • Michaels | • Toys | • Brault and Bouthillier |
| • Scholar's Choice | • Parsons ADL | • Performance | • Toys R Us |
| • Flaghouse | • Staples | • Health | • Kaydan Sensory |
| • Canada | • Wintergreen | • Walmart | • Solutions |

How long will OT consultation be provided?

OT involvement is time-limited; however, the therapist will consult with the client's parents/guardians and school team to ensure that recommendations have been provided to address their current therapy goals prior to discharge. The client may have ongoing difficulties or needs upon OT discharge; therefore, parents and school team are encouraged to continue practicing OT's recommendations to maintain or progress their skills. If new concerns arise in the future, a re-referral to NEO Kids Children's Treatment Center may be considered.

For more information and resources please visit the NEO Kids Children's Treatment Centre

Website at: <https://www.childrenstreatment.ca/>