WHEN IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY USED?

**Occupational therapy** treatment is necessary when several areas of performance are affected. These include:

- **Fine Motor Skills**: movement and dexterity of the small muscles in the hands and fingers.
- **Gross Motor Skills**: movement of the large muscles in the arms, and legs.
- **Visual Motor Skills**: a child’s movement based on the perception of visual information.
- **Oral Motor Skills**: movement of muscles in the mouth, lips, tongue, and jaw, including sucking, biting, chewing, and licking.
- **Self-Care Skills**: daily dressing, feeding and toilet tasks.
- **Sensory Integration**: ability to take in, sort out, and respond to the input received from the world.
- **Motor Planning Skills**: ability to plan, implement, and sequence motor tasks.

WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

Occupational therapy helps to solve the problems that interfere with your ability to do the things.

It can also prevent a problem or minimize its effects. When an injury, illness, disability or other problem limits your ability to:

- Take care of yourself,
- Participate in paid or unpaid work, or
- Enjoy your leisure time, e.g. hobbies, sports, spending time with family,

Occupational therapists believe that occupations (activities) describe who you are and how you feel about yourself.

AUTISM AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Sensory processing disorder (SPD), sometimes called Sensory Integration Dysfunction (SID), is extremely common among individuals on the autism spectrum. Occupational therapist trained in sensory integration, can be extremely beneficial for a person with autism. Regulating one’s sensory system is integral to growth and development.
The Sensory Systems

In the field of sensory integration, the sensory system is broken up into three main areas: tactile, vestibular, and proprioceptive. The tactile system is your sense of touch. The vestibular system is responsible for movement and the body’s position in space. The proprioceptive system deals with muscles and joints.

Sensory Integration Therapy Basics

To the inexperienced eye, sensory integration therapy can look like a normal afternoon of play. However, all of the activities that the therapist and the individual participate in actually serve a specific purpose. Some of the types of activities you might see in a sensory-based occupational therapy session include:

• Swinging in a net swing – a net swing cocoons the client providing them with proprioceptive input. At the same time, the spinning gives vestibular input; combining two types of sensory input is common in occupational therapy. To the client this may just be fun, but to the therapist, this is giving the two sensory systems input in an organized fashion.

• Jumping onto a mat – sometimes called crashing, jumping onto a mat is a great way to provide proprioceptive input; the freefall period provides vestibular input and rolling around on the mat gives tactile input. All three of the main sensory systems are stimulated with one very fun activity.

ACTIVITES IN THE CLASSROOM

Rolling up inside a blanket

Manipulating clay and squeeze toys

Crawling through a cloth tunnel

Crashing into pillows and other soft objects

References

http://www.otworks.ca/