Occupational therapists assist people throughout the lifespan participate in activities they want to do through the therapeutic use of every day occupations. Occupational therapists take a holistic approach to the treatment of individuals with varying disabilities and disorders and always remain client-centered to ensure the quality of treatment is best for the individual.

**Occupational therapists focus on**:

* adapting the environment to fit the person and including the client on the therapy team to determine a plan of care
* an individualized evaluation during which the client’s goals are determined by the client and therapist
* Customized interventions to reach goals are developed in order to advance the client’s capability to perform daily activities.
* Occupational therapists provide a variety of services, evaluations of the client’s environments, adaptive equipment training and education, and education for family members.

Occupational therapists work with children, youth, and their families to encourage active participation in activities that are meaningful to them. Recommended occupational therapy interventions are based on a comprehensive understanding of typical development in childhood and the impact of disability, illness, and impairment on the individual’s development, learning, play, and overall occupational performance. The primary occupations of young children are interacting with caregivers and play. Occupational therapists provide interventions to improve these occupations and build skills for sharing, taking turns, and playing with peers. When a child experiences an injury, occupational therapists provide services to increase movement, strength, cognitive abilities, social and interpersonal skills to improve the child’s functional abilities and independence.

Occupational therapists study in mental health and address children’s emotional and behavioral needs as they relate to everyday activities and social interaction. Services include helping children develop the ability to cope with challenges, defuse anger, calm down in order to succeed in and out of the home. Occupational therapists utilize individualized treatment approaches with children to keep their attention while implementing treatment to achieve increased functional independence. Dance therapy can be individualized to each child and their interests to achieve greater results of function.

