

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Occupational therapy helps people of all ages with “skills for the job of living.” Occupation is anything you do in a day! Children, like adults, have “occupations.” The main occupations of children are:

Playing  
(leisure activities)

Learning to care for  
themselves (self-care)

Attending preschool  
(productivity)

Sometimes because of illness, injury, disability, or developmental delay, a child may struggle to learn, develop, and participate fully in these day-to-day activities.

When an occupational therapist is asked to see a child, the therapist focuses on what is important to the child and family. This is called “family-centred practice.” If the child is in school, the therapist may also address what is important to the teacher.

**Occupational therapists** (OTs) look at a child’s ability to do the day-to-day tasks that make up ‘occupations’. OTs consider the strengths and challenges of the **child**. They also consider the **task** and how the **environment** makes tasks easier or harder.