

Therapy Across the Continuum: The School-Aged Child

Students may receive therapy services while they are in school to help them gain skills to improve learning and to be safe in school. Families and caregivers (and their student) meet with school staff to make a plan for therapy in school. This plan may be called an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan and lists the recommended therapy and goals.

School Therapy Explained.

Who is appropriate for therapy in school?

Students who have goals related to the skills they need to succeed in school. Each school district has different rules to determine if a student should receive therapy (qualifies). Services may be provided as young as 3 years and up to 21 years of age. Criteria may vary by program.

What does therapy in school look like?

School services may include Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Vision Therapy, Psychology Services, Nursing, and/or Special Education. Vocational services may also be provided (job coaching). The goal of all services is to provide support for learning and to prepare students for adulthood. Therapy can be provided as part of a small group or one-on-one with a therapist. Program guidelines vary by each school district.

Where do services happen?

School therapy is provided in many school settings including Public Schools, Independent Schools, Specialty Schools, Charter Schools, Cyber schools, Detention Centers, and Alternative Schools. Services may be provided within the classroom or outside of the classroom.

When/how often does therapy in school happen?

Services may be scheduled weekly, monthly, as needed, or monitoring based on the team's recommendations. The therapy schedule typically follows the school calendar unless the student requires therapies over school breaks (extended school year) and it is noted in the education plan.

How is therapy in school funded?

Special education must be provided in public schools by US Federal law and is paid for by the state and/or county via tax dollars. In non-public schools, the student's home school district may have some responsibility for paying, but funding sources vary.



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What if my child's needs cannot be met through School Therapy alone?

Your child may be eligible for outpatient therapies in addition to the services that they receive in school.



Know Your Options.

What is Outpatient Therapy?

Outpatient therapy is typically provided in a clinic setting. Different types of clinics exist (sensory based, sports medicine, medically based) and in some states, outpatient services can even be provided at home.

Therapists and families/caregivers work together to establish a plan of care including goals for therapy and how often it should occur. Children may receive therapy for a while and then “graduate” or take a break. If a medical change occurs or the child is ready to work toward a new functional goal, a new evaluation or re-evaluation is completed to re-start services. Outpatient therapy may be funded through health insurance and families/caregivers may have a co-pay. Visit limits vary based on each health plan.

What is Home Care Therapy?

Therapy services may be provided at home for individuals who require complex medical care or have a diagnosis that prevents them from accessing therapy in the community. The availability of and criteria to qualify for home care services may vary by area. Documentation of a medical condition that prevents the child from attending therapy in a setting outside of the home is typically necessary in order for homecare therapy to be approved and paid for by medical insurance.

If a student receives schooling at home (home bound, cyber school, home schooled) and also needs therapy supports, a school therapist may travel to the home to provide school therapy. This is a part of the education plan and is *not* considered home care.

For more information, visit: www.iprc.info