



**IWK Health**

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**IWK School Therapy Service**  
**Occupational Therapy and**  
**Physiotherapy at School**



*Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars.*  
~ Les Brown

**School Therapy Office Phone Number: 902-470-7543**  
**Email: [SchoolTherapy@iwk.nshealth.ca](mailto:SchoolTherapy@iwk.nshealth.ca)**

## ***School Therapy Team***

Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, and Rehab Assistants are IWK health care professionals. These therapists working in the School Therapy Service help students achieve success in school by ensuring that they have the functional skills and supports necessary to participate in school activities.

School Therapy is a service offered by IWK Health to students within the Central Zone of the Nova Scotia Health Authority (HRM and Windsor area). The aim of School Therapy is to work together with students, families, and school staff to identify goals and create solutions that will support students' functional needs at school. Goals generally fall within the following categories:

- Classroom productivity
- Mobility
- Participation in school activities
- Personal care

Students may be seen anywhere within the school environment (e.g. classroom, gym, playground, cafeteria, bathroom, hallway) during the natural routines of their day. Research shows that students experience the most success when they practice skills in the environment in which they usually occur.

## ***What We Do***

### **Occupational Therapists (OTs):**

- Support functional skills that impact participation and learning (e.g. handling pencils and scissors, printing legibly, following the steps in a task)
- Adapt activities and environments to optimize participation (e.g. classroom seating, use of assistive technology for written work, developmentally-appropriate play)
- Increase independence in daily living skills (e.g. dressing, eating, toileting, organization)
- Promote readiness for learning (e.g. positive behaviour supports, movement breaks, calming strategies, visual supports)
- Consult and collaborate with school staff to offer strategies that can support all students (e.g. teacher in-services on printing, whole-class desk organization sessions)

### **Physiotherapists (PTs):**

- Promote functional physical growth through daily activity and play (e.g. endurance, coordination, posture, strength, balance)
- Optimize school participation (e.g. classroom, physical education class, playground, school trips, circle time)

- Ensure safety when accessing school environment (e.g. stairs, playground, transfers)
- Support adaptive equipment needs (e.g. positioning equipment, orthotics, walking aids)
- Maximize independence for students with mobility goals (e.g. identification of alternate ways to accomplish tasks)

### **Rehab Assistants (RAs):**

- Carry out and progress interventions identified by therapists
- Support and develop resources (e.g. visual schedules and handouts)
- Adapt and modify equipment
- Support school staff to implement School Therapy Service suggestions

### ***Referral Process***

#### **Who can make a referral?**

School staff and parents/guardians can partner to make a referral to the School Therapy Service when there are identified functional goals for the student. When able, students are encouraged to be involved in the goal-setting process. The referral is valid for one school year (September to June).

### **How do I make a referral?**

The principal, learning centre teacher, or classroom teacher at the student's school can be contacted about making a referral. They will discuss it with the parent/guardian and then with the Program Planning Team at the school. This team is responsible for completing and forwarding the School Therapy Service Referral once input has been received from parents/guardians.

The referral requires the signature of the parent/guardian and principal. Please be sure that all areas of the referral are complete, including specific goals and all demographic information.

### **What happens once the referral is received?**

The student will be prioritized and assigned to the therapist who covers their school.

The family will be contacted by phone or email to discuss the child's goals and how they function and participate at school. Parents/Guardians will also be asked for consent to provide service and share information about their child with school staff, as needed. Consent to provide service to a child must be received before the child can be seen by the therapist

For more information, please contact the IWK School Therapy Service office via phone **(902) 470-7543** or email [SchoolTherapy@iwk.nshealth.ca](mailto:SchoolTherapy@iwk.nshealth.ca).

***\*This patient/family guide should not be used to replace advice from your health care provider(s). / \* Ce guide du patient/de la famille ne doit pas être utilisé pour remplacer les conseils de votre fournisseur de soins de santé.***

***\*Please, no scented products or fragrances at the IWK. / \* SVP, pas de produits parfumés ou des parfums à l'IWK.***

*IWK Rehabilitation Care Team, Halifax, NS.  
PL-0308 Last Update / Dernière mise à jour: 04/20;  
Next Review / Prochaine révision: April 2023*