

Occupational Therapy Terminology

ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING:

(ADL's) Everyday routines generally involving functional mobility and personal care, such as bathing, dressing, toileting, and meal preparation; basic self care tasks.

INSTRUMENTAL ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING:

(IADLs) The complex skills needed to successfully live independently. These skills are usually learned during the teenage years such as Managing finances, handling transportation (driving or navigating public transit), shopping, preparing meals, using the telephone and other communication devices, managing medications, housework and basic home maintenance.

BILATERAL COORDINATION:

The student's ability to use both sides of the body in a smooth, coordinated manner. Ex: jumping jacks, holding the paper with one hand (stabilizer, "helper" hand) while cutting or writing with the other hand (dominant, "worker" hand).

BODY SCHEME:

An awareness of body parts and the relationship of those parts to one another and to objects in the environment. (AKA: Kinesthetic awareness)

DEXTERITY:

The student's ability to use his/her hands skillfully.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS:

The skilled use of the student's hands. It is the ability to move the hands and fingers in a smooth, precise and controlled manner. Fine motor control is essential for efficient handling of classroom tools and materials. It may also be referred to as dexterity.

GENERALIZATION:

The student's ability to apply previously learned concepts and behaviors to new situations.

GRASP:

The student's ability to pick up and hold objects with the hand.

- **Pincer Grasp** (on objects): thumb and index finger; AKA "pincher fingers", most mature.
- **Tripod Grasp** (on objects): thumb, index, and middle fingers; less mature than pincer grasp. Tripod Grasp (on writing implement): three fingered; thumb, index, and middle fingers; most efficient
- **Quadripod Grasp** (on writing implement): four fingered; thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers.
- **Open Webspace:** when thumb and index finger form a circle; space between thumb and index finger
- **Closed Webspace:** when thumb crosses/hooks over, typically over the index finger or writing implement.
- **Dynamic:** when fingers move when using the writing implement.
- **Static:** when wrist moves when using a writing implement as opposed to dynamic finger movements which are most efficient.

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Coordinated body movements involving the large muscle groups. A few activities requiring this skill include running, walking, hopping, climbing, throwing and jumping.

HABITUATE:

Ability of student to become familiar with and used to a particular place, situation, noise, etc.; to accustom by frequent repetition or prolonged exposure.

SENSORY MODULATION: The brain's ability to take in sensory information and maintain a regulated state of arousal.

OVER RESPONSIVE:

Sensory over-responsive students are more sensitive to sensory stimulation than most people. Their bodies feel the sensation more intensely than others. A "fight or flight" response can be experienced.

UNDER RESPONSIVE:

Sensory under-responsive students are less responsive to stimuli in their environment. They may appear withdrawn, low energy or difficult to engage because they do not detect the sensory input in their environment to the same intensity as their peers.

KINESTHESIA:

The sensation of movement or strain in muscles, tendons, and joints; muscle sense.

MANIPULATION:

The student's ability to move objects within the hand, for example, grasp/release 1 of 3 marbles at a time and hold them in hand.

MOTOR PLANNING/PRAXIS:

Refers to the brain's ability to formulate an idea, plan an action and execute the action necessary for completion of a new motor skill in a sequenced way.

MUSCLE TONE:

The degree of tension present in the muscles of the body, which enable a student to assume different postures against gravity. Sufficient muscle tone allows for accurate movements and is necessary for every motor action the body makes. These include crawling, sitting upright in a chair, squatting, grasping a pencil, etc.

OCULOMOTOR:

The student's ability to control eye movement, look at, and follow objects,. Ex: reading a book, copying from the chalkboard, cutting, catching/throwing a ball.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY:

A health profession focused on the study of human growth and development with emphasis on the social, emotional and physiological effects of illness and injury. The occupational Therapist enters the field with a bachelors, masters or doctoral degree. Practitioners must complete supervised clinical internships in a variety of health care settings, and pass a national examination. Most states also regulate O.T. practice via a license. Therapy interventions are customized to adapt or restore all aspects of human "occupation" across the lifespan. O.T. is

the skilled treatment that helps individuals achieve independence in all facets of their lives.

SENSORY DIET

A term devised by Patricia Willbarger in 1971 to describe a therapeutic method to maintain an optimal level of arousal (in the nervous system) by offering the right combination of sensory information. The term diet is a metaphor for the regular “feeding of the nervous system” to change one’s state of arousal timed carefully throughout the day. A well-planned “sensory diet” should include comfort touch, pleasurable social experiences, organizing proprioception, varied tactile activities and modulating vestibular input.

SENSORY INPUT:

The constant flow of information from sensory receptors in the body to the brain and spinal cord.

SENSORY INTEGRATION:

The student’s ability to receive process and act upon sensory input for “use”. This “use” may be a perception, an adaptive response or a learning process. Through sensory integration many different parts of the nervous system work together so that a student can interact with the environment efficiently.

- **Auditory:** Auditory input is what the student hears.
- **Gustatory:** Taste. Influenced by the sense of smell, this is what the student tastes.
- **Olfactory:** Smell. This is what the student smells
- **Proprioception:** Sensations from joints, muscles and connective tissues that lead to body awareness, can be obtained by lifting, pushing, and pulling heavy objects as well as by engaging in activities that compress (push together) or distract (pull apart) the joints.
- **Tactile:** Tactile input is the sense of touch and includes texture, temperature, pressure, pain, etc.
- **Vestibular:** The sense of movement, centered in the inner ear, can be obtained by spinning and swinging, and to a lesser extent, any type of movement. This system is closely related to the visual system and provides the body with information regarding position in space
- **Visual:** Visual input is what the student sees. Interpreting stimuli through the eyes, including peripheral vision and acuity, awareness of color and pattern.

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER:

A brain irregularity that makes it hard to receive, process and act upon sensory input efficiently. Information is poorly detected, modulated or interpreted and atypical responses are observed.

STEREOGNOSIS:

The student’s ability to identifying objects through the sense of touch.

TOPOGRAPHICAL ORIENTATION:

The student’s ability to determine the location of objects and settings and the route to the location.

VISUAL DEPTH PERCEPTION:

The student’s ability to determine the relative distance between objects, figures, or landmarks and the observer, and changes in planes of surfaces. Ex: The student’s ability to judge how far away something is.

VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS:

It involves the combination of visual perception and motor coordination i.e. eye hand coordination. Difficulty with visual motor skills can result in inaccurate reaching, pointing and grasping of objects, as well as difficulty with copying, drawing, tracing and cutting.

VISUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS:

The student's ability to interpret and use what is seen in the environment. Difficulties in this area can interfere with a child's ability to learn self-help skills like tying shoelaces and academic tasks like copying from the blackboard or finding items in a busy background.

- **Visual Closure:**
The student's ability to identify forms or objects from incomplete presentations. Ex: The student's ability to distinguish a pencil from a pen even though both are half covered by a piece of paper.
- **Visual Discrimination:**
The student's ability to differentiate among symbols and forms, such as matching or separating colors, shapes, numbers, letters and words.
- **Visual Figure Ground:**
The student's ability to differentiate between foreground and background forms and objects. Ex: The student's ability to find a white wash cloth on a white sheet.
- **Visual Form Constancy:**
The student's ability to recognize the same shape, object, or letter in different situations
Ex: /t/ written in textbook is same as /t/ written on chalkboard; vertical addition is the same as horizontal addition
- **Visual Memory:**
The students' ability to recall the visual image of objects, forms, symbols, and movements Ex: games such as Concentration and Memory.
- **Visual Sequential Memory:**
The student's ability to recall a series of objects, forms, symbols, and movements. Ex: recalling a phone number that you see
- **Visual Spatial Relations:**
The ability to distinguish differences among similar objects or forms relative to directionality Ex: Correctly positioning utensils at mealtime