OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CONSULTATION TO CHILD CARE GUIDELINES

What is Occupational Therapy Consultation?

The Occupational Therapy (OT) consultative service is available to licensed child care programs/home providers, in order to address and support the successful inclusion of a child 0 to 12 years of age with extra support needs through observational assessment and written recommendations.

The consultation service is provided by an OT with either of the following service agencies.
- VHA Home Health Care, contracted by Community Living Toronto.
- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital – Accompanied by the Community Outreach ECE.

Occupational Therapists are registered with the College of Occupational Therapy and are committed to helping people do what they need or want to do in the areas of self-care, productivity, and leisure. Occupational Therapists accomplish this by enhancing skills, adapting the environment and/or changing the activity. The OT scope of practice builds on the knowledge of child development held by the Special Needs Resource staff (SNR), child care provider and family. Each works collaboratively as part of a team to discuss progress, share observations and ideas, develop plans and implement and review recommended techniques.

When should a referral be made for Occupational Therapy Consultation?

Input from an OT may be required if a child is experiencing difficulties within any areas of development, including intellectual, social/emotional (behavioural) and physical. For example:
- sensory processing: child’s responses to sensory input (sounds, touch, taste, sight, smell).
- fine motor skills: small movements of the hands (eye hand coordination, strength, etc.).
- gross motor skills: large body movements (walking, jumping, crawling).
- visual perception: connect what they see to what they do (doing puzzles, recognizing shapes etc.).
- organizational difficulties: emotional response to daily interactions (interacting with peers, tasks and routines).
- oral motor development: controlling mouth movements (drooling, chewing, swallowing, drinking, etc.).
- seating/mobility needs: the ability to maintain a sitting or standing positions.

Roles and expectations:

Special Needs Resource Staff:

- The SNR is responsible for explaining the referral for Occupational Therapy consultation service to the child care program/home provider and the parent/guardian. The Occupational Therapy Consultation to Child Care Referral Tool and Service Inquiry Record (SIR) are completed by the SNR with input from the child care program/provider and parent/guardian.
- The SNR contacts the CITYKIDS Service Navigator (416-920-6543) to review the request and confirm the service agency (Community Living Toronto or Holland Bloorview). The appropriate written consent is obtained.
• The SNR forwards completed documents to CITYKIDS Service Navigator for processing. Please note: the current best practices for secure submission of documents are; hand delivery, Canada Post, or fax.

• Once the date and time of the OT consultation has been determined through contact with the service agency it is the responsibility of the SNR to notify the child care program/provider. Parents/guardians are informed and encouraged to attend the consultation visit, if possible.

• The SNR must be present and participate in the consultation with the OT.

• The SNR requests a copy of the “Consultation Summary” from the parent/guardian after it has been received by the parent/guardian from the OT.

• The SNR assists the child care program/provider and family to implement the recommendations made by the OT.

• The SNR model techniques and coach the child care provider to develop skills and confidence.

• The SNR will arrange for recommended specialized equipment from the Community Living Toronto lending library when applicable (see Specialized and Adapted Equipment Loan Guidelines).

• When a child has received consultation and later requires consultation for a different “reason for referral” the 1-page Re-referral Form is completed and submitted directly to the service agency for appointment booking. The SNR is not required to contact the CITYKIDS Service Navigator.

CITYKIDS:

• CITYKIDS discusses the referral with the SNR to determine appropriate service agency stream and provide approximate wait time information.

• CITYKIDS receives the Occupational Therapy Consultation referral package from the SNR and reviews to ensure that it is complete.

• The referral package is sent by fax to the service agency’s contact person.

• CITYKIDS monitors and tracks demand for the OT consultation service including annual reports on trends and waitlists.

Occupational Therapist:

• The OT reviews the referral package and prepares to address the “reason for referral” as identified by the SNR in the referral package.

• If the service agency is Holland Bloorview the OT will be accompanied by the Community Outreach ECE, who’s role is specifically to provide more in-depth support and modeling as related to the referral.

• Prior to the consultation, service parameters are reviewed and informed consent is confirmed by the OT through telephone contact with the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian is invited to attend the consultation visit, if possible.
• OT consultation service is available Monday through Friday, during the hours of the program and scheduled based on the availability of the OT and SNR, as well as the program schedule. The length of visit is determined by the "reason for referral" and is generally between 1 to 2 hours.

• The consultation takes place in the licensed child care environment and includes gathering anecdotal information, observations of the child within the setting, analysis of the area of concern and verbal recommendations.

• A written summary including an overview of the child's skills and recommendations/intervention strategies is completed by the OT. Copies of the “Consultation Summary” are mailed to the parent/guardian within 4-8 weeks (to be shared with the SRN staff and child care program/provider).

• If a follow up appointment is required, the service agency will arrange another visit.

• The OT consultation is not a diagnostic service; however the OT may make recommendations for formal assessments.

Child Care Program/Provider:

• The child care program staff or home child care program provider ensures there is opportunity for the OT consultation to take place within the daily program routine.

• In the event the child is absent from the program, the service agency and SNR are immediately notified.

• The child care program/provider work with the SNR to implement the recommendations including strategies, use of toys and specialized equipment.

Parent/Guardian:

• The parent/guardian is informed of the time and date of the consultation and confirm their participation in the consultation visit, if attendance is possible.

• The parent/guardian communicates with the child care program/provider and SNR to share information that would be helpful to the OT consultation process.

• In the event that the child is going to be absent from the program at the time of the OT consultation visit, the parent/guardian informs the program supervisor/provider as soon as possible.

• The parent/guardian shares a copy of the “Consultation Summary” documentation with the SNR and child care program/provider once received from the OT.

All forms can be obtained on the CityKids Partners Forum at: www.mothercraft.ca/index.php?q=citykids-forum

For more information on any of these supports, please contact:

Toronto North (North York) (416) 392-4349
Toronto West (Etobicoke/York) (416) 392-6176
Toronto East (Scarborough) (416) 338-7560
Toronto South (Toronto/East York) (416) 392-5865