

Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service
Early Years Team (0-4yrs)
(Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust)

Overview of service

The Early Years Children's Occupational Therapy service (OT) work with children and their families to help develop and maximise safety, independence and functional skills in everyday tasks when children are affected by injury, illness, developmental delay and other disabilities. By providing early assessment and intervention, we aim to maximise the functional outcomes for all children allowing them to participate in the day to day activities of self-care, productivity and leisure.

The team work in a variety of different settings including homes, nursery/pre-school's, schools, specialist education and needs schools and clinics. We aim to support in the following ways;

- Advice and support to encourage physical development.
- Assessment of fine motor skills and advice on how best to support fine motor development through activity and play.
- Assessment and support to develop functional daily living skills such as dressing, toileting and cutlery use.
- Support with postural management of children with complex physical disabilities.
- Assessment and provision of specialist equipment such as seating, bathing and toileting equipment.
- Advice to parents, carers and education settings to support a child's therapeutic and manual handling needs.
- Assessment for home adaptations and liaison with Wirral Council Adaptations Team.
- Signposting and referring to specialist services, agencies and support networks.
- Sensory advice and strategies to support children and their families with participating in activities of daily living.

How to refer

Referrals can come from a range of healthcare and educational professionals, including health visiting team members, allied health professionals, GP's, Paediatric consultants, school special education needs coordinators and nursery managers. We do not accept referrals made directly by parent/s or guardians. Referrals must be completed using our referral form and all relevant information included in order to allow us to triage and plan our involvement. All referrals should be returned by email to wirralchildrenstherapyservice@nhs.net and must be completed in full. Incomplete referrals will be returned to the referrer and will not be triaged by the team.

General referral criteria

Referrals to the Early Year's Children's OT service must meet all of the following criteria in order to be triaged:

1. All children must be registered with a Wirral G.P
2. All Children must be within the ages of 0-5 years.
3. All referrals must clearly indicate the functional difficulties that are impacting on the child's ability to participate in activities of daily living.

Please note that should the above criteria not be met, a referral will be not be triaged and instead declined with a letter sent to the referrer informing them of this.

Physical Disability

An assessment at home or the education setting will be offered where;

- Difficulties are significantly affecting a young person's daily living at home and the educational setting and cannot be managed with mainstream advice.
- There are environmental needs in the home setting, such as access to the property, bedroom, bathroom or living room are required to promote safety and independence.
- There are environmental needs in the educational setting such as access to the classroom or toilet/washroom facilities are required to promote safety and independence.
- There are manual handling difficulties at home or within the educational setting.
- Equipment may be required at home or in the educational setting to increase independence, safety, reduce manual handling or for postural management e.g. specialist bathing equipment and specialist seating.
- Equipment requirements cannot be met by easily available routine or commercial equipment.
- Rehabilitation has been trialed unsuccessfully or would still not enable the young person to have safe access around the home.

We will not accept referral if;

- The concern relates to repairs and general maintenance of the property e.g. pathways, fencing etc.
- Behavioural management strategies or parental intervention have not been tried first e.g. CAMHs, Early Intervention Family Support.
- The needs originate from overcrowding and thus would not meet criteria set out for use of the Disabled Facilities Grant.
- To complete charity applications only.
- To complete an Education Health Care Plan form and the young person is not already known to the service.
- For the provision of car seating, harness, walking reins, handling belt when there are no other functional or postural difficulties that require our input.
- For the provision of wheelchairs or specialist buggies (please contact the Wheelchair Service)
- Children require assessment for Developmental Coordination Disorder (please see separate referral pathway for Motor Sensory Team)

Fine Motor

The OT will assess and offer advice regarding fine motor skills where there are significant difficulties affecting one or more of the following:

- The difficulties are significantly impacting on play and development
- The difficulties are preventing use of every day tools such as scissors, feeding and drinking utensils etc.
- The education setting has implemented education-based interventions and more specialist advice is required.



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- Difficulties impacting on a child's ability to undertake age-appropriate self-care tasks.

We will not accept referrals:

- If the child's fine motor difficulties are as a result of a learning delay and in line with their expected level of development. For example Global Developmental Delay.
- For the assessment and provision of handwriting advice.
- When other agencies may be able to provide more relevant advice e.g. Vision Support.

Sensory processing difficulties

The sensory pathway is an advice and strategies only service and we do not work directly with children.

The OT service will provide access to a parent sensory advice talk to families whose:

- Children are aged 2 years and above and who are unable to tolerate or access activities of daily living due to possible sensory processing difficulties.

We will not accept referrals:

- If the perceived sensory difficulty is not having a negative impact on activities of daily living
- For the provision of equipment for children with perceived sensory difficulties where a postural need is not evident (i.e- the provision of seating, bathing, toileting equipment).
- For the assessment and provision of protective clothing items such as helmets (please contact Appliances Department).
- For sensory assessment and intervention/treatment

Night-Time Safety

An OT assessment for a safety bed will be considered if:

- A child as part of their diagnosis has severely challenging night-time behaviours and it is deemed that commercially available equipment will not meet their safety needs.

AND

- All available interventions and sleep based service strategies have failed.

AND

- To ensure all appropriate medical interventions have been considered and trialed, referrals for safety beds will only be accepted from the child's named Paediatrician.



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