

## RTI and the Role of the Occupational Therapist—South Eastern Special Education

The Universal Level	The Strategic Level	The Intensive Level
Definition of Tier I Support	Definition of Tier II Support	Definition of Tier III Support
<p>Within an RtI model of education, Tier I is considered the universal level. Tier I incorporates a core curriculum which is scientifically validated or research based. Instructional practices are, likewise, research based. Universal screenings are periodically conducted to identify student proficiency levels across content areas. The resultant data is used to make further instructional decisions on both a classroom and individual student level.</p> <p>Tier I within RtI is developed to ensure high quality instruction, high quality curriculum, and universal proficiency screenings to meet the educational needs of the majority (80-90%) of students within a general classroom setting.</p> <p>The role of the Occupational Therapist, at the universal level, is in the promotion of universal design for learning. <b>Within Tier 1, the Occupational Therapist has no role at the individual student level.</b></p>	<p>A student is moved to a strategic level when his/her needs are not being met at the universal level. This could be due to a lack of challenge or need for acceleration and/or an identified gap in learning. If the specific area of concern that has been targeted involves an OT need, the problem-solving team may require the input of OT in the development of an intervention to support the student's learning. The OT should not be accessed at the individual teacher level. Consultation is to occur through the problem-solving team.</p> <p>At the strategic level, OTs are not expected to provide the interventions developed in their area of expertise nor are they expected to progress monitor the students receiving interventions, at the strategic level.</p> <p>The role of the OT, at the strategic level, can be conceptualized as capacity building. The OT is building capacity at the teacher level via the problem-solving team. This system of support serves to assist the teacher in differentiating instruction for an individual student.</p> <p>Capacity-building efforts incorporate the dissemination of information in multiple forms. Information may be disseminated in the form of a building or grade level in-service; it may be provided as an information sheet with recommended classroom activities to develop specific skills; it may be a combination of an information sheet coupled with modeling the activities within the classroom 1x or a few times in order to develop capacity within that classroom.</p> <p>One of the guiding principles behind Tier II, or strategic support, within a general education</p>	<p>This third tier of intervention includes both general education and special education. Students within Tier III, require an intensive level of support in a specific area. They may receive individualized instruction with specific content areas offered with greater frequency. After a period of intense intervention, the student may demonstrate, through on-going progress monitoring, grade level skill acquisition. Essentially, the student needs an intense, focused boost in a content area. For this student, Tier III is a short-term, intensive level of instruction.</p> <p>Other students may require an on-going intensive level of instruction in order to progress academically. In the absence of Tier III support, they may not make adequate progress. Their progress may be dependent upon on-going individualized, intensive instruction. Ultimately, students requiring on-going Tier III support may be referred, through the problem-solving process, as a student with a disability. As such, that student may require Tier III support, with a specific content area, for an indefinite amount of time.</p> <p>The point here is that the Tier III level of intensive instructional intervention includes both general education and special education students, based on need.</p> <p>The role of the OT, in a general education context, within Tier III, may be to continue to provide consultative services, possibly work directly with teachers in their small groups to embed therapeutic activities within the academic activities, and/or develop small groups targeting areas of need. These small groups may include</p>

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Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
<p><b>What Tier I Support Looks Like for OT--</b></p>	<p><b>What Tier II Support Looks Like for OT--</b></p>	<p><b>What Tier III Support Looks Like for OT--</b></p>
<p><b>**No involvement by OT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Classrooms are using CORE curriculum</li> <li>➤ Handwriting Curriculum</li> </ul>	<p><b>**Small Groups implemented by teachers with recommended activities by OT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Writing Centers</li> <li>➤ Cutting Centers</li> <li>➤ SMILE Lab</li> <li>➤ Brain Gym</li> <li>➤ Drive-Thru Menu</li> <li>➤ Provide Handouts to District</li> </ul>	<p><b>**Observations by OT (Individual Recommendations)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide Equipment??</li> <li>➤ Schedule Examples and Picture Packets</li> <li>➤ Paper Types</li> <li>➤ Grips</li> <li>➤ Weighted Pencils</li> <li>➤ Colored Overlays</li> </ul>

## **SOUTH EASTERN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Occupational Therapy Department**

#### **Response to Intervention Information Sheet**

#### **Performance Concern: Hand Fatigue**

Hand fatigue is a term used to imply weariness, tiredness, and weakness in the hand.

#### **Signs & Symptoms:**

This is seen in the child who states, "my hand is tired" after writing activities. Causes may include low/poor muscle tone, poor desk/seating position, holding a writing utensil and/or writing with too much force.

#### **Classroom Modifications:**

Use fill in the blank and/or multiple choice for writing activities.

Giving students a copy of classroom notes for home use.

Use a peer to share notes.

Use a pen or marker so the student does not feel the need to push down so hard.

Use a vertical writing surface.

Allow breaks between writing activities.

#### **Activities & Strategies:**

Be sure to have student use each hand for these activities.

Play-doh – rolling, cutting, hiding/finding small objects, flattening using one hand, and squeezing.

Wall push-ups and/or Desk push-ups.

Crawling through an obstacle path.

"Writing" in various mediums such as rice, sand, shaving cream, etc.

Placing clothespins on/off side of plastic container.

Make the letters with whole arm movement in the air or on the wall.

Consult your Occupational Therapist for further support and intervention suggestions if needed.

## **SOUTH EASTERN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Occupational Therapy Department**

#### **Response to Intervention Information Sheet**

#### **Performance Concern: Copying from the Blackboard**

Copying from a textbook or the chalkboard are important skills. Shifting gaze from the board and back down to the paper can be difficult for students who are distractible or have vision problems. Refer the student to the school nurse for screening if you have concerns about the student's vision. Be sure that the student wears glasses if he/she has them.

#### **Signs and Symptoms:**

A student might have difficulty copying from the board/textbook if he/she consistently misses words or phrases when transferring information to his/her paper, when his/her letters/words are not on the lines, or when he/she takes an excessive amount of time copying the information.

#### **Classroom Modifications:**

- Position the student facing the board. Eight feet is usually the best distance, but he/she may need to be closer or farther.
- Allow the student to use a clipboard in his/her lap if it helps.
- Be sure there are no distracting students or objects in the student's line of sight. Eliminate distractions on the student's desk.
- Make sure lighting is optimal. If using an overhead projector, make sure the student has appropriate lighting on his/her desk.
- Reduce visual distractions on the board (posters, spelling words, etc). Make sure that the chalkboard is well cleaned and that there is high contrast between the board and the chalk (not green chalk on green board, or yellow marker on white board).
- Write large enough to be seen clearly from the back of the room. Leave large spaces between words. Use a consistent format.

#### **Activities and Strategies:**

- Use color coding strategies.
- Use colored chalk to make a box around important words or write them in a different color.

-Write each sentence in a different color. You could mark the student's paper with the same color to assist with placement.

-Use ruled lines on the board and have the student copy onto lined paper to help with organization/visual cues for placement.

-Teach the student how to copy in "chunks"-a few letters or one word at a time-instead of looking up and down for each letter.

-Give the student a desktop model of the text. Position the model above the writing paper, as up and down eye movement is easier than side to side. Make sure print is large enough to read easily. Teach the student to slide a ruler or card down the model to keep track of the line of text they are copying, or use a piece of paper with a window cut in it to block off everything but what is being copied. Use a stand to hold the model in a vertical position. The model can be gradually moved farther away.

-Determine whether copying is important to the lesson. Is the amount or difficulty of copying appropriate for the student, or can it be eliminated? Can the student be provided with a photocopy of the material instead? Let the student use a computer or alphasmart if it is more efficient.

-Allow a peer to use carbon paper to make copies of notes or photocopy them. Have a peer help the student copy by showing him what to copy, proofreading his notes, or reading the text from the board.

**Consult your school occupational therapist for additional support and interventions.**

## **SOUTH EASTERN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Occupational Therapy Department**

#### **Response to Intervention Information Sheet**

#### **Performance Concern: Developing Hand Skills**

As a general rule, the student must have good wrist stabilization, separation of the sides of hand, good intrinsic (small muscles of the hand), delicate touch, and good hand arch. The following activities are broken down into these areas to help develop these skills.

##### **Wrist Stabilization:**

Wall and desk push-ups (10-12 repetitions).

Performing activities in a vertical wrist position such as vertical pegboards, Lite Brite, laying on your back and writing/coloring on paper taped to the underneath of the desk, and coloring/doodling on paper taped to the wall.

Flatten play-doh with an open flat hand.

##### **Separation of Sides of Hand:**

Trigger spray bottles.

Touching thumb to each finger individually.

Snap fingers.

Cutting activities.

Pick up small objects with fingers while forearm remains flat on table/desk.

##### **Strengthening Intrinsic and Precision Skills of Intrinsic (small muscles of the hand)**

Roll putty into small ball using thumb, index, and middle fingers.

Close zip lock bags using thumb and index finger.

String beads or buttons (making sure to push the string through rather than place the object on).

Place elbow macaroni through a small or slotted hole.

Put small legos or snap-loc beads together and pull apart.

**Delicate Touch:**

Play pick-up sticks.

Play "Jenga".

Use an eye dropper to drop a specified number of water drops.

**Developing Arches of the Hand:**

Roll/shake dice with hands cupped.

Place a tennis sized (or smaller) ball into hand and squeeze.

Flip over a row of pennies or small/flat manipulatives.

Scrunch up paper towels or tissue paper with forearm on table/desk.

**Consult your Occupational Therapist for further support and intervention suggestions if needed.**

## **SOUTH EASTERN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Occupational Therapy Department**

#### **Response to Intervention Information Sheet**

#### **Performance Concern: Body Awareness**

Body Awareness is the ability to know where one's body is in space. When we take in and effectively process sensory input, we begin building a "body map" that tells us what position our body is in and how we are moving our bodies through space and in relation to other objects. Our joints have receptors in them that tell our brain where our body is in space. If we give our joints more input (proprioceptive input), it gives our brain more information about where our body is in space.

#### **Signs and Symptoms:**

Poor body awareness can impact the ability to motor plan a new task, or correctly execute a motor task in general. Poor awareness of where the hand and fingers are in space can lead to difficulties with fine motor tasks, most importantly impacting handwriting skills. Students with poor body awareness might display decreased handwriting legibility, decreased gross/fine motor execution of skills, decreased organizational skills, and decreased ability to sit/attend while in his seat. These students might even display difficulty planning, beginning, doing, and finishing an assignment.

#### **Classroom Modifications:**

-Provide adequate supports for the student while sitting. Make sure his/her desk fits properly, with feet being flat on the ground. The student may require a more fitting chair, with arms, to assist in providing external support/input.

-Utilizing a move 'n sit may help the student by providing feedback when the child moves in his seat.

#### **Activities and Strategies:**

-Give your student activities that will give him/her increased proprioceptive input into their bodies to help build body awareness. These can be done as a class or individually, as a precursor or "warm-up" to other motor activities. These can also be incorporated throughout the day as part of his/her daily routine to give a steady "diet" of sensory input. These activities can take as little as 2-3 minutes.

-Have the child/class do jumping jacks or jumping activities. Animal imitations can be used (frog jumps, bunny hops, crab walks, etc)



-Have the child/class do push-ups (these can be done standing at the wall, sitting in his/her chair and lifting his/her bottom up to complete the push-up, or even with the student standing between two desks, and gradually lowering his/her body down and up, weight bearing on his/her arms.

-Have the child engage in push-pull activities (wagons or boxes filled with heavy objects). Washing the chalkboard, desks, or opening a heavy door also give good input.

-Carrying something heavy, such as a textbook to/from classrooms, the office, gym, etc, will provide good proprioceptive work.

-Encourage climbing on playground equipment, games of hopscotch, and digging in the sand on the playground.

**Consult your school occupational therapist for additional support and interventions.**

# **SOUTH EASTERN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

## **Occupational Therapy Department**

### **Response to Intervention Information Sheet**

#### **Performance Concern: Auditory Sensitivity**

Students who are experiencing difficulties with sensory processing skills are often sensitive to loud noises and busy classroom environments. This sensitivity can make it difficult for a student to successfully participate in classroom activities.

#### **Signs and Symptoms:**

Auditory processing can manifest itself in a variety of ways, and to different degrees. A student who displays auditory defensiveness might cover his/her ears when noises of certain levels are made. This student might cry/hide/act out when unexpected noises, such as bells/sirens, occur. Other students simply display difficulty "tuning" out the background noises. To them, the noises are just as important as your voice, and they can often hear noises, such as the sound of the fan, air conditioner, or even someone whispering across the room. These students will tend to appear that they are not processing what you are saying, or are intentionally not listening to you, when in fact they are trying with little success.

#### **Classroom Modifications:**

- Seat student near the front of the classroom to assist with limiting the noise of the classroom.
- When possible, speak with a low voice when addressing the student with auditory sensitivity.
- Use tennis balls on the bottom of chairs/desks to decrease noise while sliding across the floor.

#### **Activities and Strategies:**

- When possible, give the student advanced notice of an activity that will be noisy (i.e. assembly, singing, bell, siren, etc)
- Provide the student with a quiet area to take a break, or allow the student to run an errand when classroom noises become over stimulating. Make a plan with the student, discussing how the child can react to unwanted stimuli, and what to do when he/she feels overwhelmed.
- Try using cotton balls in the child's ears, a ski type head band, a hat, or head phones to cover ears and dampen noise (especially during louder times, such as assemblies).

**Consult your school occupational therapist for additional support and interventions.**

# South Eastern Special Education Occupational Therapy Department Performance Concern in the Classroom Tracking Form

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

School/District: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Targeted Area of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVENTION: (describe)	FREQUENCY AND DURATION: (how often, provide start date and monitor dates)	IN WHAT SETTING WAS DATA COLLECTED:	RESULTS: (was it a positive or negative response to intervention)	RATE OF PROGRESS: (as to grade level peers)

## RTI and the Role of the Physical Therapist—South Eastern Special Education

The Universal Level Definition of Tier I Support	The Strategic Level Definition of Tier II Support	The Intensive Level Definition of Tier III Support
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	<p>system is the differentiation of instruction with general education to meet the needs of multiple learners. At the targeted level, the problem-solving team and the teacher are the Physical Therapist's client.</p>	<p>both special education and general education students. The role of the Physical Therapist in Tier III, within a general education context, should be defined by intense, focused, and of short duration support.</p>
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Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
<p><b>What Tier I Support Looks Like for OT--</b></p> <p><b>**No involvement by PT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Classrooms are using CORE curriculum</li> <li>➤ PE Curriculum</li> </ul>	<p><b>What Tier II Support Looks Like for OT--</b></p> <p><b>**Small Groups implemented by teachers with recommended activities by PT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gross Motor Centers</li> <li>➤ Planned Gross Motor Activities</li> <li>➤ Provide Handouts to District</li> </ul>	<p><b>What Tier III Support Looks Like for OT--</b></p> <p><b>**Observations by PT(Individual Recommendations)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Adaptive Seating</li> <li>➤ Providing Equipment??</li> </ul>

# SOUTH EASTERN SPECIAL EDUCATION

## PHYSICAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT

### Response to Intervention Information

#### PERFORMANCE CONCERN: BALANCE SKILLS

#### General Information:

Balance is what allows us to maintain an upright and controlled posture in all our daily activities such as standing, walking, or reaching. There are 2 different kind of balance:

1. Static balance is when the body is in an upright, unsupported resting position.
2. Dynamic balance is when the body is in motion, and there is movement occurring.

Difficulty or concerns with balance in the school setting is when a student exhibits poor walking skills, lack the age appropriate skills such as jumping or hopping, decrease participation in PE or recess and difficulty with walking up/down steps. Sometimes balance problems are a “head in space” deficit, they would rather watch their feet and tend to stumble over their feet or into peers. Head position and balance go hand in hand.

#### Instructional Recommendation:

- Walking in line formation between classrooms observe to see if student is bumping into peers or tends to walk with one hand on the wall. Try having them put hands on their waist or in their pockets. Carry items in their arms helps them to stabilize while walking and will slow their walking pace down. Have students keep eyes on you, (“eyes up and forward”).
- Stairs are difficult for smaller students because of the size or depth of steps. Safety on steps is the most important. Using one hand on railing or holding onto student’s hand will help facilitate safety and decrease student’s anxiety on steps. Let the student use a step-to pattern (both feet on the step), then progress to alternating pattern. Always encourage the use of hand railing for safety especially when in crowds.
- Playground or recess time maintain supervision on students who appear clumsy. Encourage them to be active with walking up steps and sliding down slides. Swings are great for helping to develop core strength and body awareness. Have students walk around playground or gym (verses sitting) help to develop coordination and strength.
- PE is a great place for kids to learn how to move and develop balance skills. Discuss with PE teacher your concerns regarding student’s balance. PE skills can be broken down into simpler steps to encourage participation, and a student’s feeling of being successful with motor tasks.

#### Classroom Activities or Strategies to Support Development:

- In classroom have the class stand and do simple overhead reaches while standing on tip toes several times a day. This exercise is great for waking up the body’s muscles and getting ready for academics. Modifications could be having students hold onto the back of their chairs or edge of desk with one hand.
- Play a game of who can stand on one leg the longest (they cannot hop around). Normal standing on one leg time is 10 seconds. Have the class say the ABC’s or count to 10-20? Advancing this exercise would be to have them visually track letters or numbers on the board while standing on one leg.
- When doing group activities moving around the room, such as to put papers on teacher’s desk or to work on the writing board, Tape a straight line on the floor and have students try to walk on line without stepping off, walk on tiptoes or walk just on the heels in forward or backward direction.
- Any type of jumping activity in the classroom helps to develop balance and body stability.
- Sitting upright or using correct posture with the right size of desk and chair helps with building good posture and develops independent sitting balance.

Consult with your school physical therapist for additional ideas or interventions.

# SOUTH EASTERN SPECIAL EDUCATION

PHYSICAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT

Response to Intervention Information

## PERFORMANCE CONCERN: BALL SKILLS

### General Information:

Some students may exhibit difficulty with tasks that require body control, bilateral coordination and generalized strength in order to participate in structure activities in the classroom. Students should have most aspects of ball skills developed by age 6. Age appropriate skills for them to have is the ability to dribble the ball with either hand, catch a tossed ball with both hands in front of them and throw at a target with fair accuracy with distances greater than 10 feet. Ball skills will help in the development of coordination, crossing mid-line, body awareness and interaction with peers.

### Instructional Recommendation:

- Use larger and/or lighter balls such as beach balls or nerf balls. They are inexpensive and easier to see when catching from various distances.
- Have small groups or shorter distances to encourage success with ball skills. Gradually increase the distance by stepping backwards one step at a time.
- If the child acts afraid of the ball when thrown at them, keep distances short and allow time for them to react to a ball that has been thrown to them. Play with several kids in a group and allow the child to observe modeling of throwing and catching.
- When first learning ball skills avoid smaller balls such as a tennis balls or rubber balls that requires more skill and can be difficult for a student to visually track and catch.

### Playground or Classroom Activities that can be Implemented to Help Development:

- Have various sized balls available for when playing during recess.
- Discuss concerns with PE teacher and have them structure activities to include use of balls for learning this type of skill.
- Encourage parent, sibling or peers to play ball with child in various settings.
- In classroom have students wad up un-used papers and throw them in the trash can. Have students change between overhand throw and under handed throw.
- As an exercise before a test or academic task have students use a bean bag and toss it up in the air and catch it to facilitate the readiness in thinking.
- Toss a beach ball back and forth with written spelling words or vocabulary words taped to it when the in the classroom.
- A weighted ball is good to use for improving reaction timing and building strength.

Consult with your school physical therapist for additional ideas or interventions.

**South Eastern Special Education**  
**Physical Therapy Department**  
**Performance Concern in the Classroom**  
**Tracking Form**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

School/District: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Targeted Area of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

INTERVENTION: (describe)	FREQUENCY AND DURATION: (how often, provide start date and monitor dates)	IN WHAT SETTING WAS DATA COLLECTED:	RESULTS: (was it a positive or negative response to intervention)	RATE OF PROGRESS: (as to grade level peers)