



Common Terms Related to ASDs

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Occupational Therapists (OT) work with individuals with a variety of disabilities including: physical, sensory, or a cognitive disability. The role of occupational therapy is to increase independence, support and guide development and prevent further disability. Occupation means work; for children play, school, and leisure are their “occupation” or their jobs. Children develop various skills and learn through highly motivating and engaging activities, for children it looks like play. Examples of how an OT may help a child with play skills are:

- **Fine motor skills:** how to manipulate the toys and materials
- **Visual perceptual & Visual motor skills:** how one perceives and manipulates objects
- **Motor Skills:** how child moves their body in a coordinated way
- **Motor Planning:** planning and sequencing steps, having an idea and a plan, executing their plan
- **Daily living skills:** eating, dressing and hygiene
- **Body regulation:** how do I manage my body to engage in this activity?
- **Focus and attention**
- **Sensory Integrative Functions:** the body’s ability to take in and process or integrate sensory information from the environment and one’s own body and form an appropriate response for an event or action.
- **Social Skills**

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) support individuals with speech and language difficulties. The role of a SLP is to assess speech and language development and to treat speech and language disorders. A speech-language pathologist can also help individuals with swallowing and feeding disorders. Speech (expressive communication) looks at how the person talks, for example, how a person forms sounds. Language refers to the comprehension (receptive communication) within communication. This includes not only the words said, but the non verbal message paired with the words, reading body language and facial expressions, then forming a meaning behind those nonverbal messages. Examples of how an SLP may help a child through play:

- Joint Attention: Shared focus with two individuals on the same thing.
- Social Skills
- Expressive language
- Receptive Language
- Articulation
- Play skills

Physical Therapists (PT) support individuals to reduce pain, increase range of motion, strengthen muscles, build endurance, and support gross motor functioning. Physical therapists work to help individuals function at their optimum ability. Physical therapists can help children with play by:

- Improving posture
- Endurance for play and motor activities
- Strengthening
- Motor Skills needed for play, leisure, and self-care
- Social Skills
- Improving range of motion and function

Evidence Based Practice: The most common definition of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is from Dr. David Sackett. EBP is “the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of the individual patient. It means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research.” (Sackett D, 1996). Below are some examples of strategies that have been through vigorous research studies and determined to be best practice when supporting a child with developmental differences.

- **Visual supports:** “Visual supports are any tool presented visually that supports an individual as he or she moves through the day. Visual supports might include, but are not limited to, pictures, written words, objects within the environment, arrangement of the environment or visual boundaries, schedules, maps, labels, organization systems, timelines, and scripts.” (National Research Council, 2001).
- **Prompting:** any help giving to a child to support them in using a specific skill.
- **Antecedent Based Interventions (ABI):** Identify the conditions in the setting that are reinforcing the interfering behaviors then to modify the environment or task so the environment conditions no longer elicit the interfering behaviors, (Dalusong – state trainer)
- **Reinforcement:** Something is added to strengthen the desired behavior. Reinforcement can be positive or negative.
- **Task Analysis:** Breaking down a skill or task demand into smaller and more manageable steps when teaching.
- **Social Narratives:** Interventions that describe social situations in detail. Social narratives highlight important clues and offer strategies to be successful.
- **Video Modeling:** is a form of observational learning in which the desired behaviors are modeled through a video demonstration.
- **Naturalistic Interventions:** are behavior teaching procedures that occur in the context of naturally occurring activities (Koegel, O'Dell, & Koegel, 1987; McGee, Krantz, & McClannahan, 1984; Vismara & Rogers, 2010). Intervention procedures embed teaching opportunities within the environment where the skills will be needed (Vismara & Rogers).
- **Peer mediated interventions: (PMII)** Teaches typically developing peers how to interact and support social interactions.

Play Terms:

- **Solitary or independent play:** is self centered. In this form of play, children are within the same area while they use their own toys/materials. At this time they do not show any interest in the playing with others.
- **Parallel Play:** In this form of play, the child plays next to a peer, not with a peer. Parallel play is a typical form of play in developing interactive play skills.
- **Associative play:** In this form of play, children participate in similar play without any formal organization or group direction. At this time, children may share materials.
- **Cooperative Play:** In this form of play, roles are assigned and children play together. During cooperative play, children are working towards a goal in an organized approach.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): “Social and emotional learning (SEL) involves the processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” (www.casel.org)