

## **Illinois State Board of Education Recommended Practices for Occupational and Physical Therapy Services in Illinois Schools:**

### **DISTINCTION BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED THERAPY AND NON-SCHOOL-BASED THERAPY**

The determination of when occupational therapy and physical therapy are educationally relevant is a complex issue. Several issues must be considered when determining the appropriate level of school-based and non-school-based therapy.

1. School-based therapy is a part of a student's total educational program. Therapy provided within the school setting has a different orientation than therapy provided in non-school settings. School-based therapists identify needs of the student and assist in providing strategies on how best to capitalize on abilities as well as minimizing the impact of the disabilities in the educational environment. Non-school-based therapists typically evaluate performance based only on a student's disabilities. The school-based therapist also evaluates a student to determine abilities as well as disabilities. The school-based therapist then determines the adverse effect these disabilities have on the student's performance in the educational and/or community-based instructional settings. Input is gathered from teachers, parents, students and other educational staff as to how these problems may influence performance areas within the educational environment.
2. School-based therapy involves "teaming", in which recommendations and decisions are made based on input from all team members in order to determine a student's total educational plan. Non-school-based therapists make unilateral recommendations based on their individual findings to determine their individual therapy plan.
3. The principal role of school-based therapists is to assist students in benefiting from their educational program. A general guideline is that therapy must contribute to the development, improvement or maintenance of the student's functional level within the educational environment. If a student needs occupational therapy and/or physical therapy to address problems, but the problems do not prevent him or her from benefiting from the educational program, school-based therapy should not be provided. Most non-school-based therapists do not have these criteria superimposed on their recommendations for intervention (Royeen, 1992).