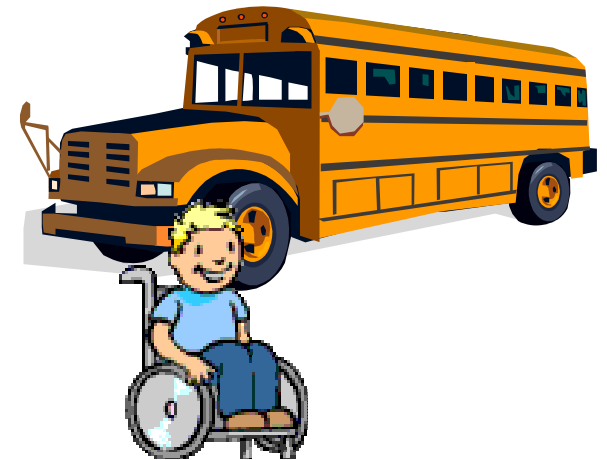


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# School Based Physical Therapy



Physical Therapy in Educational Settings  
under the Individuals with Disabilities  
Education Act (IDEA)

Columbia County Schools  
Special Services

## What is school based physical therapy?

School based physical therapy is a related service under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and is provided if the student needs therapy to function in the educational setting.

The purpose of physical therapy in the schools is to promote functional motor skills and proper positioning to enable students to benefit from their educational program.

## What is the role of the school physical therapist?

- To evaluate gross motor skills, functional mobility, environmental access and positioning/equipment needs in the school setting.
- To work collaboratively with the IEP team for evaluation, planning, intervention, and outcome measurement.
- To provide appropriate interventions as identified in the IEP. Interventions may or may not be provided directly with the student. Collaborating with the student's educational team is always a part of school therapy. Therapy may be provided individually or in groups.

## Where does school based physical therapy occur?

PT occurs in the student's educational environment. This may include the classroom, hallway, playground, lunchroom, gym, bathroom or other school settings as appropriate for the therapy activity.

## Is a physician prescription needed for school PT?

Yes, a current physician prescription is required for school based PT in compliance with Georgia state laws and regulations for physical therapists.

## How are consultative physical therapy services beneficial to students?

- can support educating of the student in the least resistive environment.
- can enhance the knowledge base of all team members that work students to improve the educational outcome.



## When should school based physical therapy be discontinued?

- when the student is no longer eligible for special education
- when other IEP team members can provide the necessary interventions
- when the student can participate in the educational program without PT support

The decision to discontinue PT is made by the IEP team.

## Limitations of school based physical therapy:

Related services, including PT, are provided only if required for a student with a disability to benefit from his/her educational program. A medical diagnosis or motor delay does not automatically indicate a need for school based PT. Related services are provided only when the identified problem areas directly impact the student's educational performance, and these problem areas cannot be addressed by the school staff. If a student has identified therapy needs that do not impact the ability to learn, function and participate in the education program, then school based physical therapy is not appropriate.