

## Occupational Therapy

Paediatric Occupational Therapists work with children of varying ages from premature babies to adolescents in order to ensure optimal neurological development and skill acquisition to enable full performance and participation in daily activities. Occupational Therapists aim to improve children's engagement and independence in self-care, play, at school, developing relationships etc. Occupational Therapists will work to enable participation by using various interventions to acquire developmentally appropriate skills, altering the environment or providing equipment, or through educating caregivers.

Occupational Therapists can assist children in areas such as:

- \* **self care** skills including **sleep/rest, toileting, hygiene, dressing and mealtimes**
- \* **fine and gross motor skills:** posture, co-ordination, hand skills, drawing.
- \* **sensory processing:** Sensory processing disorder (SPD) is an inability to process the information acquired through our senses and generate an appropriate response. This inability to process sensory information can lead to difficulties in using sensory information to plan and organise movement and make sense of the surrounding environment. Three different types of SPD are: Sensory Modulation Disorder, Sensory-based Motor Disorder, and Sensory Discrimination Disorder (Attached are indicators of a potential sensory processing disorder).
- \* staying **calm and alert** for the task at hand: e.g. self regulation, preventing and managing own behaviour.
- \* developing **play** and **friendship** skills
- \* **thinking, planning, problem solving and organisation**
- \* paying **attention**
- \* **recording school work efficiently** (handwriting and alternatives such as keyboarding)
- \* **visual perception** (understanding what is being seen).

Vital Health provides assessment, treatment and programs to any child aged from the newborn to young adults. If children are struggling with any of the areas listed above, Occupational Therapy input may be of benefit.

Occupational Therapists can also work with children with specific diagnoses. For example your child may present with:

❖	Syndromes and other genetic conditions; eg. Down Syndrome
❖	Autism Spectrum Disorder
❖	Sensory Processing Disorders – sensory modulation disorder, sensory-based motor disorder, sensory discrimination disorder
❖	Visual handicaps;
❖	Premature babies
❖	Acquired brain injury and spinal injury;
❖	Neurological diseases;
❖	Juvenile chronic arthritis and related conditions;
❖	Developmental Co-ordination disorder
❖	Developmental conditions such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and spina bifida;
❖	Behavioural/Social difficulties associated with trauma or neglect