

# Occupational Therapy Services at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders

## Overview

At the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD), occupational therapists work with children and their families to help children develop the skills—including fine motor, visual motor and visual perceptual skills—and sensory processing abilities they need to complete activities of daily living such as playing, dressing, grooming, bathing, eating and feeding. Through direct intervention, consultation and parent and caregiver training, occupational therapists focus on teaching children to successfully engage with and participate in daily life.

## Our Team

Occupational therapists at the center have extensive experience in the following areas:

- Autism spectrum disorder
- Sensory processing disorder
- Child-centered play
- Fine and gross motor development
- Visual perception and visual motor skills
- Feeding
- Early intervention
- Transition-age youth
- Administration of standardized assessments
- Evidence-based practice
- Community outreach

## Evaluations

Occupational therapists are part of an interdisciplinary team that provides evaluations and individual intervention plans for children seen at CARD. The team includes:

- Developmental pediatricians
- Neuropsychologists
- Pediatric psychiatrists
- Social workers
- Speech-language pathologists
- Behavioral specialists
- Genetic counselors



Each evaluation consists of a chart review, a caregiver interview, clinical observations and standardized assessments to determine the child's current level of performance as it relates to fine motor, gross motor, visual motor, visual perceptual and sensory processing abilities and daily living skills (including dressing, grooming, bathing, eating and playing).

## Treatment

Following an occupational therapy evaluation, an occupational therapist will make the appropriate treatment recommendations. Occupational therapy promotes positive engagement between children and their families and peers during personal or community activities that are meaningful to them.

## Individual Services

If indicated, individual treatments may be offered to provide the caregivers and children with strategies that promote independence during activities of daily living. These treatments may involve developing a sensory diet, creating child-centered play strategies, or developing strategies that facilitate fine motor or independent feeding or dressing skills.

We are all born with great potential.  
Shouldn't we all have the chance to achieve it?



Center for Autism and Related Disorders  
at Kennedy Krieger Institute

## Group Services

- **Play With Me:** This is a short-term parent-child training program designed for children under age 3 who demonstrate limited purposeful play skills due to delays in motor performance or inhibiting sensory behaviors. The goal of Play With Me is to provide families with ideas for developing skills, as well as sensory-based strategies that can be implemented within the child's natural environment.
- **PALS:** This is a social skills group that focuses on children ages 6 to 8. The group, co-led with a speech-language pathologist, is aimed at improving children's social skills, including cooperation, turn-taking, following directions and conversation skills during activities of daily living. More specifically, PALS focuses on leisure and play skills by addressing underlying deficits in the areas of sensory motor skills and language.
- **OT in Achievements:** This is a group that focuses on sensory regulation, learning readiness and generalizing functional skills in the Achievements classroom setting. Services are provided in a group setting before or during Achievements classes to children ages 3 to 6.
- **Social Skills Through Exercise and Play (SSTEP):**  
This is a social skills group for children ages 8 to 10 with mild to moderate language delays and autism spectrum disorder. Children in the group engage in movement-based activities in order to improve gross motor development, problem-solving, frustration tolerance, cooperation, regulation and overall social skills. Sessions are cofacilitated by an occupational therapist and a clinical social worker over a 12-week period.
- **Life Skills:** This is a short-term program designed for individuals from preadolescence to young adulthood, between the ages of 10 and 20. The program focuses on developing skills important for independence in daily living, establishing social and peer relationships and preparing individuals for transition to a postsecondary education setting or the workplace. The program is cofacilitated by an occupational therapist and speech-language pathologist who individualize the curriculum to meet the specific needs of each participant.

## Consultative Services

If indicated, occupational therapists will contact a child's outside providers (such as teachers, therapists, coaches and tutors) to offer consultation and education to providers working with the child.

## Training

Occupational therapists at CARD provide in-service and parent trainings throughout the year focusing on issues related to a child's development, including daily living skills, sensory processing and development of play.

## Resources

- [aota.org](http://aota.org)
- [mota.memberlodge.org](http://mota.memberlodge.org)
- [spdstar.org](http://spdstar.org)
- [pathfindersforautism.org](http://pathfindersforautism.org)

*“Occupational therapy practitioners have a holistic perspective, in which the focus is on adapting the environment to fit the person, and the person is an integral part of the therapy team.”*

– The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

## Contact Information

### Center for Autism and Related Disorders at Kennedy Krieger Institute

For more information about our program, please call **443-923-7630**. To schedule an appointment, please call **443-923-9400**, or call toll-free at **888-554-2080**. TTY users, please contact us at **443-923-2645**, or dial **711** to make a Maryland Relay call.

### [KennedyKrieger.org/CARD](http://KennedyKrieger.org/CARD)

### Physicians and Healthcare Professionals

To make a referral, call our Physician Referral Line at **443-923-9403**.

### Main Locations

3901 Greenspring Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21211

1741 Ashland Avenue, 5th Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21205

For information about other locations, please call the numbers above.

### Mailing Address

707 North Broadway  
Baltimore, MD 21205

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