

How Can Physical Therapy Help My Child?

What is Pediatric physical therapy?

Pediatric physical therapy enables children to optimize their physical potential so they can lead the most fulfilling life possible. Physical therapists strive to reduce the deleterious effects of developmental disabilities, diseases, orthopedic injuries, and accidents. The goal of physical therapy is to assist the child in achieving the highest level of function in activities of daily living in both the school and home environment.

What does a Pediatric physical therapist do?

- Identifies and manages movement dysfunction by improving muscle strength, endurance and flexibility.
- Restores, improves and promotes optimal wellness and fitness.
- Makes recommendations and orders the appropriate equipment which promotes the achievement of independent movement.
- Provides instruction on implementing a home exercise program.

The components of the therapy process include:

Initial Evaluation: The physical therapist will evaluate your child's muscle strength, flexibility, posture, ambulation, joint movement, gross motor skills and adaptive equipment needs.

Customized Treatment: The physical therapist will tailor an individual program for your child in order to achieve a specific set of goals using a wide array of treatment techniques.

Family Education: The physical therapist will provide education to the parents regarding the child's condition. The therapist will procure a home exercise program for the parent to implement at home. Compliance with the home program will ensure optimal results. The success of the patient is directly correlated to the carry over at home.

Coordinated care: Therapists engage in open communication with the patient, caregivers, doctors and teachers to coordinate therapeutic intervention.

How do I know if my child needs physical therapy?

If your child presents with the following he or she will benefit from therapy:

Orthopedic diagnoses: Torticollis, clubfoot, femoral anteversion, intoeing, outtoeing, toe walking, scoliosis, rehabilitation after fractures, sprains, strains.

Neuromuscular diagnoses: Muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, spinal muscular atrophy, hypotonia.

Developmental diagnoses: Autism/ Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Sensory integration dysfunction, poor coordination, difficulty keeping up with age level peers, delayed walking, crawling, sitting etc., poor posture and poor gross motor skills. (jumping, hopping, throwing, and skipping)

Syndromes and Metabolic Disorders: Down's syndrome, Retts syndrome, Prader Willi Syndrome, William's Syndrome.

Prematurity: Infants who are premature may present with muscle stiffness, arching, delay of developmental milestones and difficulty soothing themselves.

How often and for what length of time does my child need physical therapy?

Our goal at Kids' Therapy Center is to see permanent gains with the shortest duration of treatment. The progression towards goals is more rapid when children have intensive services.

Frequency: 2-3 times / week.

Intensity: One on one treatment in a child friendly, visually stimulating center with the same treatment protocol every session for one month with data taken.

Time: 30-45 minutes/ session.

When will my child be discharged from physical therapy?

At Kid's Therapy Center, we are always working toward discharge. The therapist and parents work together to create short and long term goals for the child. Each month a set of short term goals are selected. As the short term goals are achieved, the child advances toward reaching his long term goals. Finally, when the long term goals are all achieved, the child will be discharged.