Occupational therapist in Elementary School

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With the advancements in the education sector, educational institutes are adopting multiple strategies to make learning easier and more beneficial. Especially the educational institutes at the early learning years of the students make sure that their students are perfect in every sense so that they can grab the knowledge more effectively and excel in their academic career. For this purpose, multiple techniques are adopted to ensure that the students are healthy in both mental and physical capacities and their learning capabilities keep increasing. One of such procedures adopted is Occupational Therapy. Occupational Therapy is the adoption and use of particular activities in order to develop, recover or maintain meaningful activities (Taylor, 2017). It involves the use of assessment and intervention method both.

Occupational Therapy has been of vital importance in developing the learning skills in the children, especially for the kids of elementary schools, as they are in their early years of learning and grasp the knowledge very quickly. Occupational therapy makes sure that the student is able to participate in the entire breadth of the school activities – from developing a concentration in the classroom to playing a musical instrument; from holding a pencil to washing their hands properly; or just behaving appropriately in suitable situations, every aspect is covered by occupational therapy.

Normally, occupational therapy is provided to students with disabilities, but it can also be given to regular students, especially who face certain issues in their academic life. Occupational therapists provide services in multiple ways and various pieces of advice to the teachers and the administration of the schools in how various activities affect the learning of the students, especially at elementary school level. It includes looking over the designing of the classrooms, monitoring the student’s behavior even determining the sitting position of the student.

Occupational therapy further extends into branches and therapists adopt multiple approaches to ensure that the treatment gives maximum positive outcomes. The purpose of devising unique approaches is that not every individual responds to the same approach; if one method is fruitful on one person, it does not guarantee that it will be helpful in the case of another person as well. Two popular approaches preferred by practitioner’s in occupational therapy are Push In and Pull Out.

Push In Therapy refers to providing therapeutical services to the students inside the classroom. It may include instructional support, differentiated instruction, and other related services. Push-in method is especially beneficial as it does not create any disruption in the daily schedule of the students and it provides an opportunity to the student to learn things in a real environment (Watt, 2018). The problem with this method is that the students are unable to receive exceptionally tailored advice and disruptions during the sessions may distract the students’ learning capability.

Another beneficial approach for Occupational Therapy, Pull-In, refers to the practitioner especially working with the students outside their general classroom. It mostly comprises of group discussions in smaller groups or one-to-one sessions in a separate setting (Watt, & Richards, 2016). Pull-in services are especially useful as they help the students in getting tailored advice suited to their needs and there are less distractions in this kind of method as compared to the other method. Difficulty in Pull-in method may arise because scheduling a separate session for a single student or a limited number of students can become problematic at times, and the students will have to sacrifice their other activities like music class or physical education class for this.

Another advantageous approach can be the use of 3:1 Service Delivery Model, which is a very flexible approach and does not require specific scheduling of session. It includes three weeks of workload approach along with one week of indirect services (Garfinkel, & Seruya, 2016). In this way, occupational therapists can make sure that the students at the elementary level are learning fast and making good progress in their academic life.

**References**

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