NHS

University Hospitals Birmingham

NHS Foundation Trust

Solihull Children's Occupational Therapy Service

A helpful guide for parents and carers



What is occupational therapy?

Children's Occupational therapy helps your child live their best life. It's about being able to do the things they want and must do on a day-to-day basis.

That could mean helping your child learn how to dress themselves independently, use their knife and fork, ride a bike or to be able to write comfortably. Everything is focused on your child's wellbeing and their ability to participate in daily occupations (activities).

Sometimes, we may find it difficult to do our daily occupations, whether it be because of motor difficulties, sensory preferences or we may just generally find one task quite tricky. It is the job of an Occupational Therapist to make a child's chosen occupations easier for the young person and/or the adults who support them.



What can we help with?

An occupation is any activity that we need, want or like to do to live and to look after our health and wellbeing. An occupation is essentially any activity that "occupies" our time! Here are some examples:

Self-care



- Washing and dressing
- Toileting
- Sleep
- Applying make up/styling hair
- Putting on a headscarf or wrap
- Feeding skills

Productivity



- Accessing the classroom/workplace
- Handwriting
- Household chores
- Accessing religious activities
- Organising self and belongings

Leisure



- Playing sports
- Cooking/baking
- Going to the cinema
- Accessing playground equipment
- Anything your child **enjoys**!

What do we do?

Our aim is to identify the activities that a child wants or needs to do and consider strategies to make these occupations easier for the young person and/or the adults who support them.

Occupational therapists see beyond diagnoses and limitations to hopes and aspirations. We look at relationships between the activities your child does every day (their occupations) alongside the challenges they face as an individual and their environment.

Then, we create a plan of goals and adjustments targeted at achieving a specific set of activities. The plan is practical, realistic and personal to your child as an individual, to help you and them achieve the breakthroughs they need to elevate your everyday life.



During your initial telephone consultation, we will gather more information about your child's occupations and what your concerns are. At the end of this initial assessment, you and your therapist will agree the priority goals and plan the next steps.

Preparing for the initial telephone consultation

In order to be ready for your initial telephone consultation and to make the most of the time available, we ask that you do the following before your appointment:

1. Prepare some notes – take some time to think about your child. Have a look at the examples of what we can help with, and make a list of any goals you have for your child and family. Think about what exactly you would like to get from our service.

2. Talk to your child – within this letter, you should have received a child friendly version of this leaflet. Give them time to read it and then have a chat about what areas they feel they would like to be better at. Add their ideas to your list too! If your child is unable to read, take the time to observe and see if there is anything they are trying to do but are struggling with.

3. Visit our website – you can find lots of information about who we are, and what we can do on our website. There are videos, helpful links, and even a 'Who's who' page to help put a face to your therapist's name.

childrenscommunitytherapies.uhb.nhs.uk

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Building healthier lives

PI26/2408/03 Date: October 2026
Review date: October 2029