

Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is considered by IDEA as a related service. Related services are "developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education." This description is what differentiates PT services in the educational and the medical settings. PT in a medical setting assists the client in optimizing function in any areas deemed important by the client. PT in the educational setting focuses specifically on assisting the student in accessing and participating in their education.

At South Seneca, we typically use the School Function Assessment as a measure to determine if a student requires school based Physical Therapy.

The School Function Assessment (SFA) is used to measure a student's performance of functional tasks that support his or her participation in the academic and social aspects of an elementary school program (grades K-6). It was designed to facilitate collaborative program planning for students with a variety of disabling conditions.

The SFA is comprised of three parts:

- Part I Participation is used to examine the student's level of participation in six major school activity settings: regular or special education classroom, playground or recess, transportation to and from school, bathroom and toileting activities, transitions to and from class, and mealtime or snack time.
- Part II Task Supports is used to examine the supports currently provided to the student when he or she performs school-related functional tasks that are required to participate effectively in an educational program. Two types of task supports are examined separately: assistance (adult help) and adaptations (modifications to the environment or program, such as specialized equipment or adapted materials).
- Part III Activity Performance is used to examine the student's performance of specific school-related functional activities. Each scale includes a comprehensive set of activities that share a common functional demand such as moving around the classroom and the school, using school materials,

interacting with others, following school rules, and communicating needs. Each set of activities is used to examine in detail one of the tasks addressed globally in Part II.

Once it is determined by the CSE / CPSE Committee that a student qualifies for Physical Therapy, the Committee determines the frequency and determines goals for the student. PT sessions are typically held throughout the school environment where the student can work on skills so they can safely navigate the school setting. The Physical Therapist works closely with other school staff to monitor how the student is carrying over skills throughout their day. Therapists consult regularly with classroom teachers, PE teachers, other therapists (OT, speech etc.), Adaptive PE teachers, paraprofessionals, transportation and cafeteria staff.