Occupational Therapist Workload Activities in Partnering for Change (P4C)

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Occupational Therapist Workload Activities in Partnering for Change (P4C)

Partnering for Change (P4C) is a tiered, school-based, occupational therapy service model developed by researchers at CanChild, McMaster University in Ontario, Canada. The P4C model includes three tiers of services that address a range of occupational therapy needs in the school community.

- In **Tier 1**, occupational therapists collaborate to provide **universal** services that build educators' capacity and create inclusive learning environments that support all children's academic, developmental, social, and emotional needs.
- In **Tier 2,** occupational therapists offer **targeted**, short-term services, often in small groups, for children needing additional support in specific areas.
- In **Tier 3**, occupational therapists provide **individualized** services for children requiring the most support to participate successfully at school.

An important part of delivering P4C is the workload of the occupational therapist delivering P4C (p4cguide.com).

P4C Workload Definition

A workload approach considers how an occupational therapist's time is distributed across all tiers and activities to support every child and the entire school community and includes the full spectrum of tasks that the occupational therapist performs. In contrast, a caseload approach focuses exclusively on the number of children receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 support, without accounting for the occupational therapist's broader responsibilities to support the school community.

The following list details the key tasks and responsibilities comprising the workload of an occupational therapist delivering P4C services. Occupational therapists typically provide services in multiple schools and may work with more than one occupational therapist assistant to support the delivery of tiered services, contributing to their workload.

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Tasks to Support Initiation of Tiered Services

The activities described below for each tier reflect a service that has been established at a school. There are additional activities an occupational therapist would be involved in to initiate and establish the service including:

- Explaining and introducing a new tiered service model to families, educators, principals/administrators, and school boards
- Building relationships and rapport
- Determining which schools should be prioritized for service
- Developing and distributing information letters

Tier 1: Universal Services for All

- Create and ensure distribution of the information letter for all families at the school (refer to relevant legislation and regulatory requirements concerning the consent process in your jurisdiction of practice)
- Collaborate and communicate with educators to confirm which classrooms have shared the letter of information about the service, sharing this with occupational therapist assistants as appropriate
- Develop rapport and build relationships by spending time in classrooms
- Plan, schedule and coordinate services in alignment with classroom and school timetables and in collaboration with educators and administrators to ensure services occur within the natural context of school activities (e.g. relevant academic content, nutrition breaks, gym, music, assemblies)
- Complete an assessment of the classroom needs by gathering subjective and objective information through classroom observation and collaboration with educators
- Collaborate with educators to set classroom goals and to determine how the occupational therapist can best support the educators and children
- Collaborate with educators to build capacity in applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to the classroom/school environments and curricular activities to

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support all children's participation and model how UDL principles can be integrated into curricular tasks

- Collaborate with educators and the school team to plan, prepare and support classroom activities and lessons designed to reduce barriers to learning by providing whole class lessons/stations, tips, tools, and environmental modifications. Support educators in understanding when/where/why/how and for whom to differentiate instruction using these strategies
- Collaborate with educators to co-develop recommendations/strategies that address the range of needs in their classroom/school and that align with curriculum and are based on UDL principles
- Support educators and administrators in accessing funding for equipment, furniture, tools, and materials to support the universal design of classrooms and schools
- Communicate, plan, delegate and supervise services with occupational therapist assistants
- Document universal interventions and outcomes
- Collaborate with educators to determine children in need of Tier 2 and 3 services and assist with completing required documentation/processes to access services
- Plan and provide professional development opportunities to educators/school team and information sessions/workshops for families with content to support all children
- Attend school staff meetings when possible
- Attend school events to foster awareness of occupational therapy, support family engagement, and facilitate transitions (e.g. Welcome to Kindergarten events, school open house, school/family interviews, etc.)
- Participate on school teams and district committees to support initiatives focused on universal design and the inclusion of all children (e.g., redesigning sensory spaces, playgrounds, libraries, and/or washrooms to make these areas of the school more accessible; contributing to universal design of new curriculum)
- Participate in school department and district committees

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Tier 2: Targeted Services for Some

- Contact families, obtain and document consent for all targeted interventions, including consent for the involvement of an occupational therapist assistant and/or to review relevant information on the child's school record or other reports
- Plan, schedule and coordinate services for children in alignment with classroom and school timetables and in collaboration with educators and administrators to ensure services occur within the natural context of school activities (e.g. relevant academic content, nutrition breaks, gym, music, assemblies). This may include problem-solving and managing logistics to coordinate group sessions with multiple educators, children, and occupational therapist assistants, and to find and adapt appropriate space within the school.
- Use dynamic performance analysis to assess task performance in context of a child or group of children to identify strengths, challenges, and barriers to participation
- Communicate and collaborate with educators, the child/children, and families to review findings and set goals
- Plan and provide targeted short-term interventions for a child and/or small groups of children to trial strategies and monitor response to interventions
- Plan and prepare activities, tools, and materials to support a child or groups of children
- Share and model recommendations, strategies, tools, and environmental modifications with educators that align with the curriculum and support the participation and success of a child/children
- Collaborate with educators, support staff, administrators, and families to support the implementation of successful strategies to enhance participation and success at school
- Prepare, share, and collaborate with families regarding strategies to use at home to support school-based goals and participation at home/in community
- Communicate, plan, delegate and supervise services with occupational therapist assistants
- Support educators to access funding for required furniture, equipment, tools, materials, resources, and services; support families to access funding where occupational therapist role allows

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- Document and share Tier 2 interventions, outcomes, and communication with families, educators, and other team members/professionals
- Collaborate with educators to determine children in need of Tier 3 services and follow up with families to complete any required documentation/processes to access these services
- With family's consent:
    - Attend and share relevant information at case conferences
    - Attend and share relevant information at school planning/team meetings
    - Contribute to the development of individual education plans (IEPs)
    - Contribute to transition plans and attend transition planning meetings

Tier 3: Individualized Services Essential for Few

- Contact families, obtain and document consent for all individualized interventions, including consent for the involvement of an occupational therapist assistant and/or to review relevant information on the child's school record or other reports
- Plan, schedule and coordinate services in alignment with classroom and school timetables and in collaboration with educators and administrators to ensure services occur within the natural context of school activities (e.g. relevant academic content, nutrition breaks, gym, music, assemblies)
- Use dynamic performance analysis to assess task performance in context, to identify the child's strengths, challenges, and barriers to participation, and when warranted, administer standardized assessments to support diagnosis, referrals, and/or baseline determination of skills
- Communicate and collaborate with educators, children, and families to review findings and set goals
- Plan and provide individualized interventions to trial strategies and monitor response to interventions
- Plan and prepare activities, tools, and materials required to provide individual child with required interventions. Interventions might include one or more service delivery options, including direct service within the classroom, mediator training, consultation, collaboration and/or coaching.

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- Share and model recommendations, strategies, tools, and environmental modifications with educators that align with the curriculum and support the child's participation and success at school
- Share successful strategies with educators and the family to support participation and success at school
- Prepare, share, and collaborate with families on strategies to use at home to support school-based goals and participation at home/in community
- Support educators, educational assistants, and caregivers in the use of assistive technology and equipment for individual children
- Communicate, plan, delegate and supervise services with occupational therapist assistants
- Collaborate with, obtain, and document consent from families to initiate referrals to other professionals both within and external to the school system
- Support educators and families to access funding for required furniture, equipment, tools, materials, and to access needed resources, benefits, and services
- Support assessment, trial of and access to needed equipment through collaboration with community vendors and school board staff, including completion of necessary funding letters and applications
- Assist educators with completing required documentation/processes to access any additional services
- Document and share Tier 3 interventions, outcomes and communication with families, educators, and other team members/professionals
- With family's consent:
    - Attend and share relevant information at case conferences
    - Attend and share relevant information at school planning/team meetings
    - Contribute to the development of individual education plans (IEPs)
    - Contribute to transition plans and attend transition planning meetings

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Additional Activities

- Travel to/from assigned schools is a component of workload, particularly in regions where this can be a considerable distance
- Communicate, plan, coordinate and supervise services involving student occupational therapists (when applicable)
- Support the onboarding of new occupational therapists and occupational therapist assistants
- Mentor occupational therapist and occupational therapist assistant colleagues, students, and new staff
- Complete required data collection related to workload management
- Identify and advocate for resources required to support the occupational therapist assistant role across the three tiers
- Develop and share information and resources to support educators and families in their understanding of tiered services
- Complete employer training requirements
- Participate in professional association activities
- Participate in professional development

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