Occupational Therapist Assistant Workload Activities in Partnering for Change (P4C)

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

Occupational therapist assistants support tiered services, under the supervision of, and as delegated by, an occupational therapist.

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

P4C Workload Definition

A workload approach considers how an occupational therapist assistant'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 assistant 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 assistant's broader responsibilities to support the school community.

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The following list details the key tasks and responsibilities comprising the workload of an occupational therapist assistant delivering P4C services, **all of which fall under the supervision of, and as delegated by, an occupational therapist.** Occupational therapist assistants may work with more than one occupational therapist to support the delivery of tiered services in multiple schools, contributing to their workload.

Tasks to Support Initiation of Services

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

- Explaining and introducing a new tiered service model to families, educators, principals
- Building relationships and rapport
- Distributing information letters

Tier 1: Universal Services for All

- Collaborate and communicate with the supervising occupational therapist to confirm which classrooms have shared the letter of information about the service
- Communicate, plan and coordinate services with the occupational therapist
- 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)
- Prepare activities, tools, and materials to support educators and whole classes of children (e.g. photocopying, assembling packages, circulating materials to educators, etc.)

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- Collaborate with educators to build capacity in applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to the classroom/school environments and curricular activities to support all children's participation
- Model how UDL principles can be integrated into curricular tasks and the classroom environment
- Collaborate with educators and the school team to prepare and support classroom activities and lessons designed to reduce barriers to learning by providing whole class lessons/stations, tips, tools, and environmental modifications.
- Communicate, plan, and coordinate services with the occupational therapist
- Document universal interventions and outcomes
- Under occupational therapist supervision, provide professional development opportunities to educators/ school team and information sessions/ workshops for families with content to support all children
- Attend school events to foster awareness of occupational therapy and occupational therapist assistant services, support family engagement, and facilitate transitions (e.g. Welcome to Kindergarten events, school open house, school/family interviews, etc.)

Tier 2: Targeted Services for Some

- Collaborate and communicate with the supervising occupational therapist to ensure services proceed once the occupational therapist has obtained informed consent for the services including involvement of the occupational therapist assistant
- 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 and children and to find and adapt appropriate space within the school.

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- Under the supervision of an occupational therapist, provide targeted short-term interventions for a child and/or small groups of children to trial strategies
- Prepare activities, tools, and materials to support a child or groups of children (e.g. photocopying and assembling packages)
- 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. This may include organizing and developing materials and resources.
- Prepare, share, and collaborate with families regarding strategies to use at home to support school-based goals and participation at home/in community
- Share relevant observations and coordinate service delivery with the supervising occupational therapist
- Document and share Tier 2 interventions, outcomes, and communication with families, educators and other team members/professionals

Tier 3: Individualized Services Essential for Few

- Collaborate and communicate with the supervising occupational therapist to ensure services proceed once the occupational therapist has obtained informed consent for the services including involvement of the occupational therapist assistant
- 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)
- Under the supervision of the occupational therapist, provide individualized interventions to children
- Prepare activities, tools, and materials required to provide individual child with required interventions (e.g. photocopying and assembling packages)

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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. This may include organizing and developing materials and resources
- Support educators, educational assistants, and caregivers in the use of assistive technology and equipment for individual children
- Share relevant observations and coordinate services with the occupational therapist
- Document and share Tier 3 interventions, outcomes and communication with families, educators, and other team members/professionals

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 a student occupational therapist assistant (when applicable)
- Support the onboarding of new occupational therapist assistants
- Mentor occupational therapist assistant colleagues, students, and new staff
- Complete required data collection related to workload management
- Identify and advocate for resources required to support occupational therapist and occupational therapist assistant roles 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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