

## THERAPUTIC SPECIALISTS: OT/PT

Professional specialists include the following:

- Physical therapists, who offer specialized services to physically challenged children.
- Occupational therapists, who offer life-skills training.

Therapists are an integral part of the school community, working as members of the entire team of educators. Their work is not “extra”; rather, it is central to ensuring that certain students have full access to the school’s offerings. However, not every school staff includes each of the therapeutic specialists on a full-time basis. The consequence, as with other shared resources, is that communication between the specialist and both administrators and classroom teachers is a critical aspect of the role.

The domains and components of a therapeutic specialist’s responsibilities are as follows:

### Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<b>1a. Demonstrating knowledge and skill in the specialist therapy area; holding the relevant certificate or license</b>	Specialist demonstrates little or no knowledge and skill in the therapy area; does not hold the necessary certificate or license.	Specialist demonstrates basic knowledge and skill in the therapy area; holds the necessary certificate or license.	Specialist demonstrates thorough knowledge and skill in the therapy area; holds the necessary certificate or license.	Specialist demonstrates extensive knowledge and skill in the therapy area; holds an advanced certificate or license.
<b>1b. Establishing goals for the therapy program appropriate to the setting and the students served</b>	Specialist has no clear goals for the therapy program, or they are inappropriate to either the situation or the age of the students or needs of student.	Specialist’s goals for the therapy program are rudimentary and are partially suitable to the situation and to the age of the students or needs of the student.	Specialist’s goals for the therapy program are clear and appropriate to the situation in the school and to the age of the students or needs of the student.	Specialist’s goals for the therapy program are highly appropriate to the situation in the school and to the age of the students or needs of the student and have been developed following consultations with administrators and teachers.

<b>1c. Demonstrating knowledge of district, state and federal regulations and guidelines</b>	Specialist demonstrates little or no knowledge of special education laws and procedures.	Specialist demonstrates basic knowledge of special education laws and procedures.	Specialist demonstrates thorough knowledge of special education laws and procedures.	Specialist's knowledge of special education laws and procedures is extensive; specialist takes a leadership role in reviewing and revising district policies.
<b>1d. Demonstrating knowledge of resources, both within and beyond the school and district</b>	Specialist demonstrates little or no knowledge of resources for students available through the school or district.	Specialist demonstrates basic knowledge of resources for students available through the school or district.	Specialist demonstrates thorough knowledge of resources for students available through the school or district and some familiarity with resources outside the district.	Specialist demonstrates extensive knowledge of resources for students available through the school or district and in the larger community.
<b>1e. Collaborating with the regular school program, to meet the needs of individual students</b>	Therapy program consists of a random collection of unrelated activities, lacking coherence or an overall structure.	Specialist's plan has a guiding principle and includes a number of worthwhile activities, but some of them don't fit with the broader goals.	Specialist has developed a plan that includes the important aspects of work in the setting.	Specialist's plan is highly coherent and preventive and serves to support students individually, within the broader educational program.

## Domain 2: The Environment

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<b>2a. Establishing rapport with students</b>	Specialist's Interactions with students are negative or inappropriate; students appear uncomfortable in the environment.	Specialist's interactions are a mix of positive and negative; the specialist's efforts at developing rapport are partially successful.	Specialist's interactions with students are positive and respectful; students appear comfortable in the environment.	Students seek out the specialist, reflecting a high degree of comfort and trust in the relationship.

<b>2b. Organizing time effectively</b>	Specialist exercises poor judgment in setting priorities, resulting in confusion, missed deadlines, and conflicting schedules.	Specialist's time-management skills are moderately well developed; essential activities are carried out, but not always in the most efficient manner.	Specialist exercises good judgment in setting priorities, resulting in clear schedules and important work being accomplished in an efficient manner.	Specialist demonstrates excellent time-management skills, accomplishing tasks in a seamless manner; teachers and students understand their schedules.
<b>2c. Establishing standards of conduct in the environment</b>	No standards of conduct have been established, and specialist disregards or fails to address negative student behavior during evaluation or treatment.	Standards of conduct appear to have been established for the environment. Specialist's attempts to monitor and correct negative student behavior during evaluation and treatment are partially successful.	Standards of conduct appear to have been established for the environment. Specialist monitors student behavior against those standards; response to students is appropriate and respectful.	Standards of conduct have been established for the environment. Specialist's monitoring of students is subtle and preventive, and students engage in self-monitoring behavior.
<b>2d. Organizing physical space for testing of students and providing therapy</b>	The testing and treatment center is disorganized and poorly suited to working with students. Materials are usually available.	The testing and treatment center is moderately well organized and moderately well suited to working with students. Materials are difficult to find when needed.	The testing and treatment center is well organized; materials are available when needed.	The testing and treatment center is highly organized and is inviting to students. Materials are convenient when needed.

### Domain 3: Delivery of Service

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<b>3a. Responding to referrals and evaluating student needs</b>	Specialist fails to respond to referrals within the required time line or makes hasty assessments of students needs.	Specialist responds to referrals within the required time line when pressed and makes adequate assessments of student needs.	Specialist responds to referrals within the required time line and makes thorough assessments of student needs.	Specialist is proactive in responding to referrals within the required time line and makes highly competent assessments of student needs.

<b>3b. Developing and implementing treatment plans to maximize students' success</b>	Specialist fails to develop treatment plans suitable for students, or plans are mismatched with the findings of assessments.	Specialist's plans for students are partially suitable for them or sporadically aligned with identified needs.	Specialist's plans for students are suitable for them and are aligned with identified needs.	Specialist develops comprehensive plans for students, finding ways to creatively meet student needs and incorporate many related elements.
<b>3c. Communicating with families</b>	Specialist fails to communicate with families for evaluations or communications in an insensitive manner.	Specialist's communication with families is partially successful; there are occasional insensitivities to cultural and linguistic or socio-economic needs.	Specialist communicates with families and doing so in a manner sensitive to cultural, linguistic or socio-economic needs.	Specialist communicates with families in a manner highly sensitive to cultural, linguistic or socio-economic needs. Specialist reaches out to families of students to enhance trust.
<b>3d. Collecting information; writing reports</b>	Specialist neglects to collect important information on which to base treatment plans; reports are inaccurate or not appropriate to the audience and not done within required timelines.	Specialist collects most of the important information on which to base treatment plans; reports are accurate but lacking in clarity and not always appropriate to the audience but done within the required timeliness.	Specialist collects all the important information on which to base treatment plans; reports are accurate and appropriate to the audience and on time.	Specialist is proactive in collecting important information, interviewing teachers and parents if necessary; reports are accurate and clearly written and are tailored for the audience and on time.
<b>3e. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to student needs</b>	Specialist adheres to the plan or program, in spite of evidence of its inadequacy.	Specialist makes modest changes in the treatment program when confronted with evidence of the need for change.	Specialist makes revisions in the treatment program when they are needed.	Specialist is continually seeking ways to improve the treatment program and makes changes as needed in response to student, parent, or teacher input.

## Domain 4 – Professional Responsibilities

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<b>4a. Reflecting on practice</b>	Specialist does not reflect on practice, or the reflections are inaccurate or self-serving.	Specialist's reflection on practice is moderately accurate and objective without citing specific examples, and with only global suggestions as to how it might be improved.	Specialist's reflection provides an accurate and objective description of practice, citing specific positive and negative characteristics. Specialist makes some specific suggestions as to how the therapy program might be improved.	Specialist's reflection is highly accurate and perceptive, citing specific examples that were not fully successful for at least some students. Specialist draws on an extensive repertoire to suggest alternative strategies.
<b>4b. Collaborating with teachers and administrators</b>	Specialist is not available to staff for questions and planning and declines to provide background material when requested.	Specialist is available to staff for questions and planning and provides background material when requested.	Specialist initiates contact with teachers and administrators to confer regarding individual cases.	Specialist seeks out teachers and administrators to confer regarding cases, soliciting their perspectives on individual students.
<b>4c. Maintaining an effective data-management system</b>	Specialist's data-management system is either nonexistent or in disarray; it cannot be used to monitor student progress or to adjust treatment when needed.	Specialist has developed a rudimentary data-management system for monitoring student progress and occasionally uses it to adjust treatment when needed.	Specialist has developed an effective data-management system for monitoring student progress and uses it to adjust treatment when needed.	Specialist has developed a highly effective data-management system for monitoring student progress and uses it to adjust treatment when needed. Specialist uses the system to communicate with teachers and parents.

<b>4d. Participating in a professional community</b>	Specialist's relationships with colleagues are negative or self-serving, and specialist avoids being involved in school and district events and projects.	Specialist's relationships with colleagues are cordial, and specialist participates in school and district events and projects when specifically asked to do so.	Specialist participates actively in school and district events and projects and maintains positive and productive relationships with colleagues.	Specialist makes a substantial contribution to school and district events and projects and assumes a leadership role with colleagues.
<b>4e. Engaging in professional development</b>	Specialist does not participate in professional development activities, even when such activities are clearly needed for the development of skills.	Specialist's participating in professional development activities is limited to those that are convenient or are required.	Specialist seeks out opportunities for professional development based on an individual assessment of need.	Specialist actively pursues professional development opportunities and makes a substantial contribution to the profession through such activities as offering workshops to colleagues.
<b>4f. Showing professionalism, including integrity, advocacy, and maintaining confidentiality</b>	Specialist displays dishonesty in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public and violates principles of confidentiality.	Specialist is honest in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public, plays a moderate advocacy role for students, and does not violate norms of confidentiality.	Specialist displays high standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public and advocates for students when needed.	Specialist can be counted on to hold the highest standards of honesty and integrity, and confidentiality and to advocate for students, taking a leadership role with colleagues.