



April 25, 2022

**TO:** Occupational Therapy Practitioners

**FROM:** Occupational Therapy Practice Board

**SUBJECT:** **Updated Guidance Regarding Occupational and Physical Therapy Services**

The Occupational Therapy Practice Board (board) reviewed and discussed a request for guidance from an occupational therapy (OT) practitioner at their October 2021, January 2022, and April 2022 board meetings. The board also reached out to the Hearing and Speech and Physical Therapy boards to discuss the request.

The request was for the board to provide guidance regarding physical therapists (PTs) and OTs who provide services in a school setting. The board replied to a similar correspondence item in 2008 and 2011, when a practitioner requested guidance on OTs who work in a school district and provide gross motor special education services that may include physical therapy services.

After discussion, the board provided the following guidance:

- An OT cannot work off of a PT evaluation.
- An OT cannot evaluate or qualify a person for PT services.
- If an OT identifies specific needs that are not within the services they are providing as an OT, the OT should consult with the appropriate professionals who may provide the appropriate services.
- OTs should evaluate their cases to determine whether the client needs OT services. If an OT cannot address the issues, then the OT should make a referral to an appropriate professional for evaluation.
- [RCW 18.59.020](#) provides the definition of occupational therapy.
- The board cannot give guidance on what is in another profession's scope of practice.

Additional information:

- [WAC 246-847-170](#) provides guidance regarding the code of ethics and standards of professional conduct.
- OTs have a responsibility for mandatory reporting as described in [WAC 246-847-180](#).
- OTs must practice with a license per [RCW 18.59.031](#). Any practice outside an OT's scope of practice may constitute unprofessional conduct under RCW [18.130.180\(12\)](#).

If you have any additional questions, please contact the program manager for the board, Kathy Weed, at 360-236-4883.