

# HOW OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY HELPS IN AUTISM



Written By

**DR. P. SUMITHA HEMAVATHY (PT)**

**Founder & Director – CAPAAR**

# Introduction

Communication problems, Interaction issues with others, limitations in the development of play skills, in developing their interests and activities – these are the typical issues that a person with **Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD** faces. But the good news is with Occupational Therapy they may be able to develop these skills at home and in the school environment as well.

# What's the role of occupational therapy (OT) in treating autism?



# What's the role of occupational therapy (OT) in treating autism?

Occupational therapy in Bangalore will have expertise in assessing the effects of illness or injury on the social, emotional and psychological side of a person. They study in detail a person's development in relation to their interaction with the environment in general by observing their daily activities. With this, they will be in a position to enable a person with **autism** towards developing those skills that help in independent living, which they otherwise struggle to do.

Occupational therapy in Bangalore form a team along with the child's teacher, parents and few of their associates who are there with an objective to observe and help to develop a child's level of social interaction, behavior in the environment and the level of participation in the classroom real-time.

***Occupational therapy can help you in two steps:  
Evaluation and Therapy.***



# How is occupational therapy useful for the evaluation of Autism Spectrum Disorder?



# How is occupational therapy useful for the evaluation of Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Children of various age groups tend to demonstrate various behavior patterns whether it is in dressing, keeping their room clean or even playing games. The occupational therapist may adopt modern techniques like videotaped observation for precise assessment of a child's interaction with its surroundings; let it be parents, friends or teachers, etc.

As a part of the observation they may look at:

- The child's span of attention and stamina in the given time frame

- Ability to switch to new activities
- Level of Play skills
- Level of personal space the child desires
- Pattern of Responses to various stimuli
- Motor skill assessment
- Assessment of the presence of any aggressive or other forms of extreme behavior
- Nature of Interactions with the caretakers



# How does occupational therapy help a person with autism spectrum disorder?



# How does occupational therapy help a person with autism spectrum disorder?

Before we start we must know there is no one common - standard solution for all **treatment of Autism**. Each individual with the information gathered from their assessment calls for a tailor-made therapy design best suited for them. And early interventions do offer better results, i.e., initiation of the therapy by the age of 2-3 years.

**Some of the occupational therapy strategies are:**

- Engaging the child into those activities which are physical in nature like into solving puzzles etc that help boost child's coordination and body awareness
- Engaging the child into those games that require them to use interaction and communication skills.
- Encouraging self-developmental tasks which the autistic children usually struggle like brushing teeth and combing hair.
- Teaching them skills that enable them in adapting to transitions easily.

# What are the benefits of occupational therapy in Autism?



# **What are the benefits of occupational therapy in Autism?**

The main focus behind OT is to bring in improvement into the quality of life the autistic person is living. By means of acquainting, teaching to sustain and gradually upgrading their skills with an objective to enable them to live their normal life more independently with lesser help from others.

**Skills that OT may help autism child to develop in their lives are:**

- Personal care life skills like dressing, self - hygiene, grooming, etc.



- Training them on delicate motor skills to carry handwriting using pens or use of smaller tools in day to day lives safely and effectively
- General motor skills required for walking, climbing stairs, etc.
- Skill that helps to differentiate between colors, shapes, and sizes – the perceptual skills like awareness of his or her body and its relation to others
- Visual skills for reading and writing
- Most importantly social and interpersonal skills for communication

## **These skills will empower the child to:**

- Develop a relationship with people of their own age and adults
- Develop skills to maintain focus on tasks
- Learn how to holdup contentment
- Better and clearer Expression of feelings
- Better engagement levels with people of the same age in plays and games
- Learn the key skill of self-regulation

# What is sensory integration therapy?



# What is sensory integration therapy?

Medical Stats reveal that as high as 8/10th of children **diagnosed with ASD** will have issues with processing sensory input. For instance, their brains won't be able to differentiate background noise.

Similar signs of issues with processing sensory input may include Body balance issues, Issues with body positioning in spaces, excessive sensitivity particular kinds of touches. These challenges to an extent may contribute towards social, behavioral or attention-related issues in ASD.

However current researches that are done suggest that academic performance doesn't greatly improve with Sensory Therapy. And though more material is needed to say that Occupational Therapy can assist with sensory integration and few other behavior-related issues.

## **Examples of Sensory Integration therapy usually have:**

- Deep touch and massage
- Constricting elbows and knees
- Swerving
- Revolving on a scooter



# How can someone obtain OT services for Autism

You may choose to approach OT services or Occupational therapists in Bangalore either on a private basis, through a statewide early childhood intervention program, or by contacting concerned authorities at the school. Public law schools are supposed to provide a few modes of OT to those who are in need of it. Good news is even private insurance also usually covers OT. Among all the useful options School-based OT appears to be a more practical approach in getting OT. The private Therapies are supposed to be more intensive medically.



# CAPAAR

GET UP! GET HERE! GET WELL!

**Dr. P. Sumitha Hemavathy (PT)**

**FOUNDER & DIRECTOR**

**(CAPAAR)**

**Centre for Advanced Pediatric  
And Adult Rehabilitation**

---

# CONCLUSION

---



To Know More  
Let's Connect

◆ [www.capaar4autism.com](http://www.capaar4autism.com) ◆