

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Tiered Occupational Therapy in School

What is Tiered Occupational Therapy in school?

This model is being rolled out across Ontario, helping students at school get the right care at the right time, in the right way. Grandview Kids is starting to offer Tiered OT services at *some* schools in September 2023.

What are the different Tiers of service?

Tier One – Universal, Good for All

- Strategies and/or equipment that anyone in the classroom can use if it is helpful.
- Invitations to workshops or links to resources for teachers, EAs, caregivers or students
- **Examples:** wiggle cushions, classroom activity centres, pencil grips, different kinds of scissors, different height desks, noise cancelling headphones, movement breaks, pictures of steps when using the bathroom or getting ready to go out for recess, etc.

Tier Two – Targeted, Necessary for Some

- Strategies and/or equipment for a specific student
- Can be done in small groups
- Difficulties that have a greater impact at school
- **Examples:** Chrome book, several strategies needed for one challenge, off the shelf solutions, such as step stool at sink and toilet, student-specific pictures of an activity, etc.

Tier Three – Individualized, Essential for One

- Includes one-to-one assessments and customized solutions
- **Examples:** bathroom renovations, student-specific sensory plan, special switch access to computer, staff training for complex lifts and transfers, etc.

How will I know if my child is getting Tier One services?

Your school will send home a letter describing Tier One Services, letting you know it is being offered in your child's school. Caregivers can choose to refuse Tier One classroom supports. Referrals with parent consent are needed for a student to be seen in Tier Two or Tier Three. Your child's teacher/education staff may share that the Occupational Therapist (OT) has been in your child's classroom. The OT will always share resources and strategies with your teacher, who can then share them with you. There may be activities or resources sent home in your child's backpack.

What kinds of things might the OT do in my child's classroom?

If your child is in Kindergarten or Grade One, the OT may spend time observing in the classroom, or they may run an activity centre to help with learning specific skills, such as printing or cutting. The OT may set up pictures to help children with the class routine, or to help with transitions, such as going out for recess. The OT may send home activities you can do together with your child to help them with skills they use at school.

What if my child is older than Grade 1?

The OT may still provide general strategies for your child's teacher/education staff to try with the entire class.

What if my child needs more help?

If the teacher, Resource Teacher and OT agree that your child needs more help than Tier One services, someone from the school will call and explain what they are seeing at school and how the referral process works to move to a different Tier or individual service. You will be asked to agree to the referral (give consent). On a regular basis, the OT and the Resource Teacher will meet to go over all the students on the OT waiting list to decide who will be seen next. The OT will be in your school every three to four weeks. The OT will call you to understand your concerns, and invite you to an assessment, likely at one of the Grandview Kids offices. They will also share their findings and coach you in ways to support your child.

Does my child get discharged from OT?

Once your child's individual needs are met, they may be discharged from direct OT service, but can still receive Tier One support.

My child already has a school-based OT. Is anything changing?

Your child will stay on OT services until the OT re-assesses them. If their needs can be met at Tier One, they may be discharged, and continue with Tier One (Good for All) supports. Because the OT is in the school regularly and will be connected with teachers and education staff, they will know quickly if anything has changed for your child. Your current OT will call or email you if there are changes to your child's care plan.

Why is this change happening now?

Tiered OT services has been growing across Ontario over the past 10 years. Research is showing that more students get the support they need, more quickly, in this model. This is the best model of care for students in schools.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you have questions about Grandview Kids Tiered OT services, please contact your Occupational Therapist or the Director Clinical Services – School Years by calling 905-728-1673.