Occupational vs. Physical Therapy
Who Helps With What?

Sensory Processing

- Covers ears or overreacts to typical sounds
- Avoids messy play, certain textures, or tactile input
- Becomes dysregulated with transitions
- Seeks excessive movement (spinning, crashing) to engage
- Difficulty staying regulated without sensory input
- Reactive to textures, sounds, touch
- Appears withdrawn, misses verbal instructions or name

Fine & Oral Motor

- Excess drooling
- Tongue thrust or poor tongue control
- Difficulty with lip closure or blowing tasks
- Gag reflex triggered easily
- Food pocketing or texture aversion
- Jaw drops open at rest
- Struggles with writing, tracing or typing
- Difficulty with buttons, snaps, zippers
- Drops toys easily
- Difficulty connecting toy pieces or puzzles

Emotional Regulation & Executive Function

- Unable to stay on task
- Shuts down when tasks become difficult
- Big emotional swings
- Appears "behavioral" but is actually overwhelmed
- Difficulty starting, switching or finishing tasks
- Requires constant redirection to engage
- Task sequencing & planning difficulties
- Social anxiety

Visual Processing

- Eye tracking difficulties
- Reading struggles: skips lines, loses place reading
- Difficulty using AAC with hands or eyes
- Difficulty locating items in visually busy environments

OT

Other Symptoms

- Motor planning influencing task production
- Toe walking
- Inconsistent performance across environments
- Poor head control
- Low muscle tone
- Apraxia
- Fidgets often
- Ataxic movements

Body Awareness

- Struggles to cross midline during activities
- Avoids or struggles with ball-tracking tasks
- Rhythm and timing difficulties
- Impaired hand-eye coordination
- Needs significantly more repetition than peers

Breath & Voice

- Speaks in short bursts or runs over of air mid-sentence
- Weak, breathy, or inconsistent vocal quality
- Audible mouth breathing during session
- Poor coordination of breath with output tasks
- Difficulty projecting or sustaining voice

OT &/ OR PT

Gross Motor Skills

- Difficulty with jumping, hopping, or climbing
- Low muscle tone affecting whole-body movement
- Struggles carrying/ lifting/pushing items
- Stiffness limiting movement
- Dislikes physical activities like PE, sports and playground
- Limited whole-body coordination

Gait & Foot-Eye Coordination

- Uneven gait
- Stands/walks with wide base of support
- Difficulty coordinating eyes and feet together
- Trips or stumbles frequently
- Unsteady on hills or inclines
- Easily trips on obstacles
- Requires railing or hand held assist when using stairs

Postural Stability

- Slides down in chair / can't maintain upright posture
- W sitting
- Props head on hand or table
- Fatigues quickly during table work
- Voice or output fades as session goes on

PT

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moving + grooving
PEDIATRIC PHYSICAL THERAPY