

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

OT at the Miriam School

Occupational Therapists conduct evaluations of every student enrolled at the Miriam School. In addition to their individualized treatment plans for students, they are involved in teaching keyboarding and webbing skills, physical education and endurance work.

Students at the Miriam School receive fine motor therapy to address concerns with correct pencil grasp, scissor grasp, and manipulation of small objects which prepares students for the rigors of written work. If needed, hand therapy is also provided. Printing and cursive are taught to our younger students using a kinesthetic approach which focuses on improving memory and sequencing of letters.



Students in our middle and upper grade classrooms work on fine and gross motor skills with occupational therapists as well. Miriam's technology program allows students to work on computers and learn to master keyboarding and word processing as well as other programs which enrich classroom work. Over 50 Neo laptops (personal word processors) are available in the classrooms providing assistance to many children with educational needs.

Sometimes, children exhibit extraordinary sensitivity to stimuli or seek out maximum amounts of deep pressure. This sensitivity is often disregarded or attributed to attention deficits. Some children are just considered "picky eaters," "really cuddly" or as "having delicate skin." For sensory seekers, they may "crash" their bodies into walls, walk with heavy feet, or give really hard hugs. Parents of these children report that they have had to cut the tags out of all of their child's clothing; that the child needs gentle massages every night before he goes to sleep; that she won't eat anything but soft food; that he never sits still. For these children, what is being exhibited is sensory sensitivity.

The brain stem receives sensory input from receptors all over the body and then processes and organizes a motor response. For some children, a problem in the brain stem impedes the processing and organizing portion in one or more of the three sensory systems (Tactile, Vestibular and Proprioceptive Systems) causing inaccurate motor responses.

Students at the Miriam School receive a routine "sensory diet" that helps them self-regulate and remain focused in the classroom to enable them to be ready to learn and socialize with peers.



The Miriam School, founded in 1956, serves children Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade with multiple learning disabilities, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, auditory processing deficits, and/or speech/language problems. Children achieve in ungraded classrooms taught by certified special education teachers in a team approach with speech/language therapists and occupational therapists.

For more information, please call 314.968.5225.