

Welcome!

As you know, this new school year will be very different than any so far. Everyone is working together towards making school a place that first and foremost, protects students and staff from the spread of COVID 19. Because of the new precautions and distancing rules, school "looks" very different this year. For example, students will be limited in the amount of movement they can do, in the amount of socializing they do, and in general, may possibly be feeling more stress about all of the rules and changes they are experiencing.

As occupational therapists, we especially care for the sensory motor, social emotional, and mental health needs of your child, aside from improving the development of fine motor skills. We want to partner with families and the school to be as proactive as we can to assist your child get the input that they need safely. Here are some ways you can assist your child throughout this school year:

Vestibular movement is so important for regulation, postural control, and hand-eye coordination.

Give your child opportunities to put their head in different positions!

If there is a swing or trampoline, a place to tumble safely, a hill to roll down, a bike to ride, go for it!

Give your child time for unstructured play outdoors daily! They will benefit from all season play outdoors which will help improve focus, mood, appetite, and sleep.

Calming Strategies

Drink a thick liquid through a straw!

Breathe In

Breathe Out

Smell the Flower

Blow out the candle

Chew on crunchy, hard snacks!

Create a 'calm down' fort area where your child can be surrounded by pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals

Roll your child up in a 'blanket burrito'

I love bear hugs!

Deep pressure/resistance activities are calming... carry in groceries, laundry baskets, wall push ups, etc.

Don't forget about those emotions!

Become an observer of and a listener to your child.

They may not be able to express in words how they are feeling, but watch their behaviors and expressions closely, especially this year.

Give them room when they need it, give them loving support when they need it.

Help your child to safely participate in social interactions with peers and family members.

The opportunity to interact virtually and in person while reading body language, facial cues, and unstructured interaction is so important for social emotional growth.

Reminder for parents:

Give yourself a break when you need it!

Parents and caregivers have had to take on a lot during this pandemic. Make sure you take care of yourself so that you can care for others! Help your child see a model of someone doing their best but also being realistic about balancing all of the demands on your time and energy.

You've got this!

If you have any questions, contact our agency at (607) 725-7420 or childsplayot@gmail.com