

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Your Child's First Physical Therapy Appointment

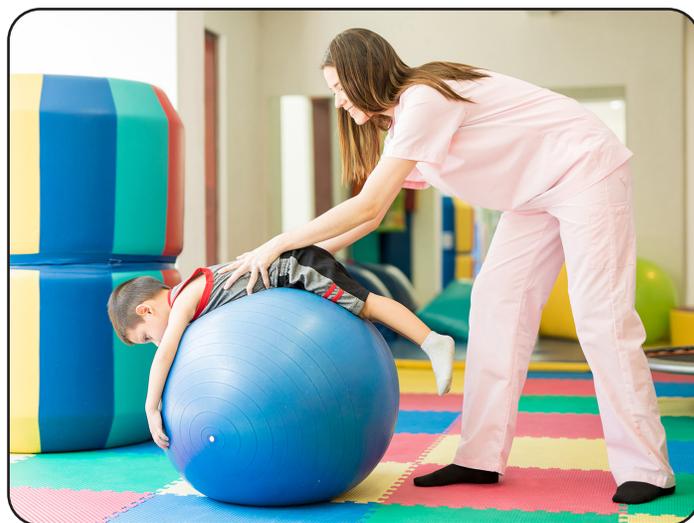
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### How Do I Find a PT?



If you are looking for a physical therapist for your child, it is important to locate one who specializes in working with pediatric populations, because testing and treatment techniques are different for children and adults.

There are several ways to find a physical therapist. Your school district may have a physical therapist who can observe and/or test your child for motor delays. Children's hospitals have pediatric physical therapists on staff, and each state has early intervention programs that offer physical therapy services for qualifying children, birth to age three. Your child's pediatrician can also recommend a physical therapist or therapy clinic.



### What Should I Expect at My Child's First Appointment?



Prior to scheduling an appointment within a private or hospital-based rehabilitation setting, you may be required to obtain a physical therapy referral from your child's pediatrician or other medical specialist. If you have concerns about your child's motor skills, consult with his/her teacher about scheduling a physical therapy evaluation.

The first visit with a physical therapist will include an initial evaluation. A PT evaluation generally involves the administration of standardized motor assessments (tests), skilled observation by the clinician, and interview questions regarding current function and patient/family goals. The PT will use the findings from this evaluation to decide whether your child qualifies to receive PT services.

Following the evaluation, the therapist will review the findings with you, establish treatment goals and objectives, and obtain written permission from you and your child's pediatrician to move forward with therapy. A report of findings is often submitted to insurance for approval and treatment reimbursement.



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## What Questions Should I Ask the PT?



The physical therapist will ask you questions about your child's medical and developmental history as part of your child's physical therapy evaluation. Here are a few questions you may want to ask the PT before and/or during your child's first appointment:



For helpful physical therapy materials, go to [www.superduperinc.com](http://www.superduperinc.com) and click on "OT & PT Resources".

## Prior to the Evaluation Appointment:



- What age group do you work with?
- What specific area (early intervention, cerebral palsy) is your specialty?
- How quickly can you see my child, and what methods of payment are required?
- After the evaluation, is there a waiting list for treatment?
- What other certifications have you obtained as a PT?

## During the Evaluation Appointment:



- How frequently will my child need therapy? How did you make that decision?
- Can I observe therapy sessions?
- How will you check my child's progress?
- What types of activities will you be doing with my child during therapy?
- Where can I get resources to learn more about my child's diagnosis?
- What can I do to help my child with his/her difficulties?

Resources:

<https://www.apta.org/your-career/careers-in-physical-therapy/becoming-a-pt>

<https://www.xopt1.com/blog/diseases-treated-by-physical-therapy/>

<https://pediatricapta.org/consumer-patient-information/pdfs/09%20ABCs%20of%20Ped%20PT.pdf>

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