

OTAC OT SCHOOL CREDENTIAL INITIATIVE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

VISION STATEMENT:

We envision that occupational therapy is a powerful, widely recognized, science-driven, and evidence-based profession with a globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society's occupational needs.

Adopted from AOTA, August 2009.



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1. WHY CREDENTIALING NOW?

The educational system is missing the expertise of a key professional at the planning and decision making level. The occupational therapist perspective and background knowledge can significantly contribute to the goals of the State Performance Plan serving children's and school districts' needs in a variety of areas. Underutilizing occupational therapists who could contribute a broader application of their educational background and expertise in biological, psychological, and social sciences potentially limits students' access to education and postsecondary outcomes. As the needs of today's children and families are growing more complex and districts are evermore accountable for positive outcomes now is the best time for districts to benefit from occupational therapists' expertise.

2. WHAT WILL IT ALLOW OTs TO DO THAT WE CANNOT DO NOW?

A credential will allow occupational therapists to contribute to program planning for children with special needs, lead teams in universal design for learning, collaborate to develop optimal learning environments, assist students with transition, and participate in curriculum design in various roles. In order to become an administrator in public schools or serve as program specialists, personnel need to have an administrative services credential, which is not currently available to occupational therapists.

3. WHY A CLINICAL OR REHABILITATION SERVICES CREDENTIAL?

Clinical or rehabilitation services credential is the credential that has been identified as the credential that closely relates to the current expertise and professional preparation of the occupational therapist practicing in the schools. Occupational therapy is a rehabilitation based profession performing educationally related clinical roles within the school setting.

4. DOES IT MATTER IF OTs ARE CLASSIFIED OR CERTIFICATED?

Hiring practices are up to individual school districts. Pursuing a credential might help to inform hiring practices.

5. IF I'M AN OT, WILL I HAVE TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL TO OBTAIN A CREDENTIAL?

We do not know the answer to this question at this time. We anticipate licensed occupational therapists currently working in the schools will be allowed to stay working as a school therapists and likely be required to take some coursework to obtain the credential.

6. IF I WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THIS INITIATIVE, HOW CAN I?

Great! A lot of support and volunteers will be needed to pass this credentialing initiative. We will need help facilitating information sessions, keeping stakeholders updated, and attending various chapter meetings. The OTAC OT School-based Practice Subcommittee is also open for membership. For more information, please contact Amanda Carney at otacschoolbasedpractice@otaonline.org.

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