

Occupational Therapy Resources in BC

Occupational Therapy services for all patients (actively receiving treatment and follow-up) are provided by the following programs located throughout B.C.. Centres are generally located in larger cities with the therapists traveling to outlying areas or parents having to drive to the city.

(Please note, this is my understanding and there are some variations/exceptions).

In-patients at BCCH

Areas covered:

- There is a 0.6 FTE Occupational Therapist allocated to the 3B in-patient unit (Hematology/Oncology/BMT), Neuro-oncology in-patients, and Oncology Out-patient clinic.

Role of the Occupational Therapist:

- ADL assessment and training to increase independence.
- Developmental assessment and treatment.
- Standardized O.T. assessments as required by research protocols.
- Splinting and positioning for prevention of contractures and to increase function.
- Clinical feeding evaluation and Videofluoroscopic Feeding Studies.
- Pressure sore management.
- Discharge planning (including equipment procurement, safety in the home, and referral to community therapy services).
- Issues related to energy conservation, safety, relaxation, lifestyle changes, and leisure activities.
- Palliative care issues related to occupational therapy (ex. equipment, adaptive aids, pressure sore management, and community OT support).

In the community

Infants:

- Infant Development Programs (IDP's) – Serves children from birth to three years old who are at risk for or who already have a delay in development. They can provide a physiotherapy consultation, but usually do not have occupational therapy services.

Preschool Children: Early Intervention Program (0 – 5 years)

- Child Development Centres (CDC) - CDC's have occupational therapy services but most likely follow-up patients will receive limited services. There are also differences depending on geographical region.
- The Centre for Ability provides services for children 0-5 years old with neurological deficits and has recently expanded to provide services to children with developmental delays.
- Vancouver Regional Pediatric Team - Provides occupational therapy services to children ages 5 to 19 with special health care needs or complex medical conditions. Also serves children from birth to 19 years who need home care, palliative care, or who require assessment to determine eligibility for nursing support services. Referral required.

School-Age Children:

- Vancouver Regional Pediatric Team – see above.
- School-Based Occupational Therapists – the therapists generally have huge caseloads and are only able to provide consultation services. Waitlists will vary between school districts. Children are categorized as “low incidence” whose occupational therapy needs include wheelchair access, toileting, feeding, and specialized seating versus “high incidence” with fine motor problems and learning disabilities. Generally the “low incidence” children’s needs are prioritized which means that unless one of the oncology children has significant issues, they likely would not receive service. Some school districts only fund education services, others also include home, i.e. the occupational therapist may be able to see the child in school but not at home. This is a huge gap in service for children who need occupational services for ADL’s at home. There is another gap in community services for children who attend private schools, are home-schooled or who are not currently attending school for health reasons (i.e. palliative).
- Community/Homecare occupational therapists are very reluctant to take on children. Their mandate is +18 years and they generally refuse pediatric referrals. Homecare addresses safety in the home but they do not provide rehab services.

Adolescents:

- Serviced by the school-based therapists above, but less so. GF Strong provides some vocational rehab counseling through their AYA program, but the adolescent must have a brain injury (i.e. Brain tumour).
- Vancouver Regional Pediatric Team – see above.

At Home Program

The At Home Program states that they will fund therapy services, however, the child must be on the At Home Program and the program is limited in what it will fund. Also, they will only pay \$60/hour for therapy services and private therapists in the community are generally paid \$80/hour, leaving the family responsible for finding funding to cover the entire cost.

Community Brain Injury Program

Children with brain tumours are eligible to receive six months of service (does not have to be continuous) from the CBIP but the referral must be made within one year of diagnosis. The CBIP’s mandate is rehab; therefore, if a child is palliative, they cannot provide services. CBIP therapists should, however, be referring these children to long term community services once CBIP services are discontinued.

Private Practice Occupational Therapy

Private practice occupational therapy services are available but parents will need to pay privately.

Feeding Teams

The following centres provide feeding assessments and/or follow-up:

- BC Children's Hospital (including videofluoroscopic feeding studies).
- Surrey Memorial
- Sunny Hill Health Centre
- South Fraser Child Development Centre
- Community Therapists

Equipment

- The Red Cross – adult oriented equipment more appropriate for adolescents.
- Children's Medical Equipment Recycling and Loan Service (CMERLS) – provides recycled medical equipment (i.e. wheelchairs, walkers, bathing and toileting aides) for children who are covered under the 'At Home' or 'In Care' programs of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Equipment is maintained by the Red Cross and is available to the children for as long as required.
- Medical Equipment Loan Service – basic medical equipment (ex. Wheelchairs, walkers, commodes, bath boards, etc.) is loaned on a no charge basis to children. This equipment is available from 17 sites across the Lower Mainland and requires a referral from a health care professional.
- Equipment Rentals – if families have funding or extended health benefits, they may also be able to rent necessary equipment from rental agencies.

Compiled by:

Jennifer Dalton
BScOT
BC Children's Hospital

Astrid St.Pierre
BScOT
BC Children's Hospital

Additional information:

For a listing of private practice and public services available in the Province, please go to the BC Society of Occupational Therapists website (www.bcsot.org)