

# Occupational Therapy (OT)



## What is Occupational Therapy (OT) and how can it help?

Occupational therapy, OT as its often referred to, is an area of health that helps people to manage everyday living and work tasks that they might find difficult. They can help with everything to do with how we move and use our bodies for every day activities. This could include how we manage the stairs, cut paper using scissors, hold a pencil, use a knife and fork. Most people learn and manage these everyday activities easily. Some children will struggle with these physical things and will need extra help to learn these skills. Some may need extra equipment to help to make things easier, like easy to hold drinking cups or walking frames. Some children who benefit from OT have short-term needs that, with help and support, will fade with time. Other children may have long-term or lifelong needs and OT may be part of their longer term support. OT can also help parent carers who have to do a lot of lifting and moving for their children, teaching you how to do these things safely for you and your child and also helping with specialist equipment. They can advise on adapting your home or your child's school if needed. They can also help identify a range of needs including dyspraxia and sensory processing needs. They don't give a diagnosis - that's for the paediatricians. This is a free NHS Service. There are private OTs who charge for the same services.

## How do I request Occupational Therapy?

Referral to the free NHS Service is usually via school or your GP:

<https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/cambridgeshire-children's-occupational-therapy/coordination-and-motor-skills---online-learning>

The OT service expect that there has already been support in place to develop skills - there guide explains this: [https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/docs/default-source/cambs-OT/guide-for-referrers-\(october-2019\).docx?sfvrsn=0](https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/docs/default-source/cambs-OT/guide-for-referrers-(october-2019).docx?sfvrsn=0)

## Who can help?

- Start with your child's teacher or SENCo and tell them what is worrying you. They can check a number of things to see if they can work out what your child finds difficult. They may seek further help from an Occupational Therapist.
- You can find things that will help you develop your child's skills and videos to help you on Cambridgeshire's Occupational Therapy pages: <https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/cambridgeshire-children's-occupational-therapy>
- The best thing you can do is to talk to the professionals and work together to help your child learn and develop.

## Where to find out more on website:

[www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk) and look under Useful Information