

There are many kinds of therapy available to help children (and adults) with disabilities reach their fullest potential. This document outlines some of these therapies and details a few of their benefits. This is ***not*** an exhaustive list of therapies or related services children can receive under an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) during early intervention or through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) during school years.

TYPE OF THERAPY	WHAT IS IT?	WHY IT MIGHT HELP
Animal /Pet Therapy	The use of animals, including pets, to help people cope with and recover from some physical and mental health conditions or disabilities.	Can reduce pain, anxiety, depression, and fatigue. Can alert to dangerous conditions (seizures, etc.) and perform actions to help people. Can increase social interactions.
Art Therapy	Helps individuals through active art making, creative process, psychological theory, and human experience. Engages the mind, body, and spirit through art.	Can improve cognitive and sensory motor functions, foster self-esteem, and self-awareness, enhance social skills, and reduce and resolve conflicts and distress.
Audiology/Hearing Therapy	Services determine existence and types of hearing impairments, provide rehabilitative services, assess amplification devices such as hearing aid; teaches individuals how to make the most of their remaining hearing.	Provides amplification devices. Can help individuals adjust to new devices (hearing aids, cochlear implants. Can provide strategies for use in the classroom and community.
Behavior Therapy	Refers to a broad range of techniques to reduce or eliminate unwanted behavior while reinforcing desirable behaviors. Includes but is not limited to Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS).	Focused and action-oriented and can produce results in a relatively short period of time. Used to treat Anxiety, Autism, Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Eating Disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Substance Use Disorders.

TYPE OF THERAPY	WHAT IS IT?	WHY IT MIGHT HELP
Counseling	Services provided by qualified visiting teachers, social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors or other qualified personnel to ensure that a child’s special education and related needs are met and helps the child overcome barriers to success. Includes rehabilitation counseling.	Can help individuals with disabilities overcome difficult academic and social situations. In a school setting, counselors may mediate or communicate the student’s situation to the school, parents, teachers, or students. Can support students with academic issues like learning styles and test scores.
Equine Therapy or, Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) including Therapeutic Riding	Working with horses can offer therapeutic benefits for children and adults with a wide range of physical, cognitive, and emotional conditions.	Benefits include building muscle tone, strength and control, increasing range of motion, endurance, balance, gross and fine motor skills, stimulating cardio-respiratory function, and assisting in coordination, sensory integration and ambulation.
Feeding Therapy	Helps children learn how to eat or eat better. Typically, feeding therapists are occupational therapists (OTs) or speech language pathologists (SLPs) though not all OTs or SLPs are qualified to provide this type of therapy.	Can help meet goals like eating independently, drinking from a cup, and help mitigate medical or other challenges that result in difficulty eating.
Music Therapy	Evidence-based intervention that helps children and adults address physical, emotional, cognitive, or social needs through development and implementation of an individualized treatment plan by a credentialed therapist.	Can help individuals struggle to communicate using words and other nonverbal methods. Can support physical rehabilitation, motor control, cognitive function, speech and language function, and/or provide an outlet for feelings and reduce anxiety.
Occupational Therapy (OT)	Designed to help people carry out daily activities and improve quality of life. Helps people develop, recover, and improve skills impaired by injury, disability, and other reasons and to prevent the loss of skills.	Helps develop, recover, and improve skills. OT’s evaluate the environment and the person’s needs and recommend helpful changes. Examples include eating aids, grabbers, use of a ramp, installing handrails or grab bars, helping with writing skills, and more.

TYPE OF THERAPY	WHAT IS IT?	WHY IT MIGHT HELP
Orientation and Mobility (O&M)	Provides students who are blind, vision impaired, or deaf-blind with skills needed to enable them to safely move within their environments. It includes travel training, use of a cane or service animal, use of vision aids, and use of other senses.	Helps students who are blind, vision impaired, or deaf-blind manage daily life and maximize independence. Increases safety when walking or using public transit, improves self-confidence, helps people adjust to blindness, and increases the use of other senses like hearing or touch.
Physical Therapy (PT)	Focuses on improving people’s ability to move because of disability, stiff joints, pain, recovery from surgery or injury, and to prevent injury.	Can improve mobility, manage pain, build strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination.
Speech Language Pathology Services (SLP)	Services used to identify/diagnose speech or language impairments, provide direct services and/or counseling to parents, teachers, and students.	Can provide a way to communicate, assist with social skills, help with reading and writing, and implement an alternative communication system, such as pictures, signs, and communication devices. Effective communication can, also, reduce behavior challenges.
Therapeutic Recreation	Adaptive recreational activities for persons with physical or mental illness or a disability.	Enhances body image perception, improve gross and fine motor skills, reduce anxiety, prevent social isolation, increase mobility and life satisfaction.
Vision Therapy	Designed under a doctor’s supervision to correct specific vision problems and/or improve visual skills. Like physical therapy for the vision system.	Can correct problems that interfere with reading, reduce digital eye strain, or computer vision syndrome. Can be used to treat “lazy eye”, eye alignment, eye movement disorders, and focusing disorders.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Animal/Pet Therapy

[Animal therapy: How it works, benefits, and more \(medicalnewstoday.com\)](http://medicalnewstoday.com)

Art Therapy

American Art Therapy Association

Audiology/Hearing Therapy

[Audiology | Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU \(chrichmond.org\)](http://chrichmond.org)

Behavior Therapy

[What Is Behavioral Therapy? \(verywellmind.com\)](http://verywellmind.com)

Counseling

[Tips for a School Counselor Working with Special Education Students - BrightHub Education](http://BrightHub Education)

Equine Therapy/Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) including Therapeutic Riding

[Learn more about EAAT, Path International](http://Path International)

[Benefits of EAAT by Disability, Path International](http://Path International)

[Using Equine Therapy as Mental Health Treatment, Verywell Mind](http://Verywell Mind)

Feeding Therapy

[Everything You Need to Know About Feeding Therapy - Your Kid's Table](http://Your Kid's Table)

Music Therapy

[What is Music Therapy | What is Music Therapy? | American Music Therapy Association \(AMTA\)](http://American Music Therapy Association (AMTA))

Occupational Therapy (OT)

https://doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/parents/parents_guide.pdf

[Occupational therapy: What it is, who it treats, and more \(medicalnewstoday.com\)](http://medicalnewstoday.com)

Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

[VA Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired Home \(vdbvi.org\)](http://vdbvi.org)

[Orientation and Mobility Resources | Perkins eLearning](http://Perkins eLearning)

Physical Therapy (PT)

[10 Benefits of Physical Therapy \(centrichealthcare.org\)](http://centrichealthcare.org)

Speech Language Pathology Services (SLP)

[Speech Language Resources, VDOE](http://VDOE)

[Speech and Language Services in Schools, AHSA.org](http://AHSA.org)

Therapeutic Recreation

[What are the benefits of recreational therapy? | Collection Spotlight from the National Rehabilitation Information Center \(wordpress.com\)](http://wordpress.com)

Vision Therapy

[Vision therapy for kids \(allaboutvision.com\)](http://allaboutvision.com)

www.dbvi.org