

Emerge



A Child's Place

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Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy

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Disorders
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Disorders
Handwriting Impairments
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Why Children Need Bi-Disciplinary Therapy Assessments



Bonnie Hacker, OT
Founder / Director

Pediatric occupational therapy and pediatric speech therapy are taught and practiced as two separate disciplines, but, in reality, many children present with global sets of difficulties that require both skill sets. For this reason, most children referred for one type of assessment and treatment should also receive the other type of assessment and possibly treatment. Insisting on a practice that provides both occupational and speech therapy helps ensure a thorough approach to pediatric therapy.

Pediatric occupational therapy focuses on helping children with motor skills development, self-care skills, sensory processing, academic skills, social challenges, and emotional challenges. Pediatric speech therapy focuses on the skills and abilities related to communication (especially verbal) and on eating and feeding. However, it is believed that some of the same brain structures that may be implicated in motor challenges are also implicated in speech and language challenges.¹ **Research now clearly shows a strong co-existence between developmental speech and language disorders (DSL/D), fine motor problems, and gross motor problems.** Among children with DSL/Ds, researchers have found the incidence of motor problems to range between 40% and 90%.²⁻⁷



In addition to genetic / neurologic deficits that may account for the high co-existence of speech and gross motor skill development difficulties,⁸⁻¹² environmental factors could play into the situation. Communication difficulties negatively influence social acceptance and, consequently, participation in play and sports activities. Subsequent loss of opportunities to practice and develop motor skills reinforce social avoidance patterns.^{12,13} Therefore it is possible that the common co-existence between speech and motor difficulties is the result of genetic /neurologic deficits, consequential social patterns, or a combination of both.

When a deficit in motor skills has been identified, the likelihood that a subtle speech deficit exists is strong, and the converse is also true. Parents and child care professionals should insist that practices performing therapy assessments for these children have both occupational and speech therapy assessment and treatment available.



The Fun Place for Therapy

At Emerge, children find spacious rooms, large windows, colorful surroundings, and lots of toys and playful equipment. In general, Emerge is a place children like at first sight and look forward to visiting again. Important therapy has never been so much fun.

**Please tell parents about Emerge – A Child's Place
Believing in a Child's Potential to Flourish**

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