



Information for School Staff and Families



The USC offers an occupational therapy (OT) clinic for children and youth as part of its occupational therapy program. The Child and Youth OT Clinic is a student-led clinic where OT students work directly with children, families and teachers under supervision to support children to engage in a broad range of activities at school, at home and in the community. The Child and Youth Occupational Therapy Clinic forms an integral part of OT student education. Students are supervised by a Clinical Placement Trainer who is a registered, experienced occupational therapist.

What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational therapists support people to do the all the things that “occupy” their day. For children and youth, occupational therapists can support children to participate in occupations such as:

Self-care

- Dressing, including manipulating buttons and zips, tying laces, learning to put clothes on the right way around, putting on shoes/socks, learning how to sequence dressing
- Personal grooming activities including hair brushing, teeth brushing, washing hands, drying self after swimming or shower
- Using the toilet independently
- Opening lunch containers
- Pouring a drink
- Making a sandwich
- Using cutlery

School work/ Part-time work

- Using hands effectively to hold and use everyday objects such as pencils, scissors, and other tools e.g. glue stick, folding paper, handling money
- Writing and pre-writing
- Attending to and engaging in learning/work activities
- Starting and completing activities independently
- Cooperating with teachers, other students and other people in the community
- Using public transport and finding the way to get to places

Play/Leisure

- Using free time for play and leisure
- Participating in a range of both passive (sitting down play e.g. screen time) and active leisure activities
- Playing with peers and learning social rules such as turn-taking, sharing and waiting
- Using indoor and outdoor play equipment meaningfully and playfully

Occupational therapists collaborate with parents, teachers and others to support a child/young person's participation in daily occupations. Interventions include:

- Developing foundation skills required by the child to participate in occupations (e.g. attention, motor, social/play skills)
- Finding ways to support the environment to support the child such as remove visual clutter or noise or making a quiet corner in a room to allow the child to have quiet time.
- Providing information and education to caregivers about ways to change the 'occupation' or activity to increase your child's participation.
- Providing information to caregivers about how to support your child's tolerance and engagement in daily activities and routines (e.g. hair washing, eating, dressing).

Is my child/youth eligible?

Many government and non-government agencies offer occupational therapy services to children and youth. The Clinic can provide support for children not able to access services from other agencies (e.g. Education Queensland, the NDIS or ECEI). If your child is receiving or able to receive OT services somewhere else, they are ineligible to access our service.

How much does it cost?

Services are provided free of charge as they are provided by OT students who are not efficient with service provision.

Where is it located?

We are located at Level 1 Ochre Health Clinic in Sippy Downs on Ochre Way (opposite Youi). As we are not affiliated with the general practice, please do not check in at the main reception on the ground level as they do not have access to our booking schedule.

What does the service entail?

Understanding your child's and your needs will occur through a telephone or face to face meeting with you and/or the referrer.

An initial appointment will be offered with you, with or without your child, to help clarify your needs and the purpose of the referral and to establish a focus for therapy.

If your child has not previously been assessed by an occupational therapist, we may ask to observe how your child currently attempts activities that you have identified as challenging for your child e.g. tying shoe laces, writing, creating a craft activity, playing a game within the clinic. Sometimes we will use informal games and activities and other times we may choose more structured tasks in the form of assessment tools. The purpose of these are to identify your child's current skill level and abilities. This can help us work with you to develop some strategies to support your child.

You are required to attend assessment appointments with your child because it will help your child feel safe and comfortable getting to know our OT students and you can give us useful information about your child's performance and needs.

We will work with you and your child to try out and problem solve strategies to support your child's participation in everyday activities at home, in the community and school. This may involve attending our Clinic for some appointments and then trying the strategies at home or elsewhere. We will need you to be available to give us feedback about whether the strategies work or not. This process often takes a few weeks and may involve several face-to-face appointments or phone calls/emails.

A report summarising your needs and those of your child, therapy goals, strategies trialed, and your child's progress is produced at the end of the service.

What else should I know?

This service is provided by OT students from the USC at various stages of their learning. Students might be in their third or fourth year of their degree. At no stage will the work of the OT students exceed their level of skill and knowledge. All students hold current Blue Cards for Suitability for Working with Children. They have also undergone Criminal History checks before coming on placement and hold current Senior First Aid Certificates.

Occasionally services may be suspended due to unforeseen circumstances and reasonable attempts will be made to communicate this to you ahead of time, although this may not always be possible. Make-up appointments may not be available. The quality of services provided by students, as occupational therapists in training, will vary from student to student dependent on their learning and skill development and may not be at the same level as an experienced, registered occupational therapist. Services provided by OT students will be in-directly overseen by the Clinical Placement Trainer, who is a registered and experienced occupational therapist to ensure safety and effectiveness of services. If you have any concerns about the services provided by the OT student, please contact the Clinical Placement Trainer on the details below.

How does my child access the Child and Youth Clinic?

Families can self-refer or be referred to the Child and Youth Clinic by another professional e.g. OT, GP, Psychologist, Speech Pathologist etc. by contacting the Clinical Placement Trainer, Cate Hilly on the details provided at the end of this information.

If you would like your child to participate in the program, please complete the attached Parent/Caregiver Permission form and "Information About Your Child" checklist and return it to Cate Hilly, USC Clinical Placement Trainer, Child and Youth Clinic via email chilly@usc.edu.au or mail to ML33, School of Health and Sports Sciences, The University of the Sunshine Coast Maroochydore DC QLD 4558.

If you have any other reports from professionals, we would appreciate you sharing these with us so that our service can consider and integrate other information about your child and strategies that you already have tried.

You will be contacted by the Clinical Placement Trainer or an OT student to discuss support for your child and discuss your expectation of the Clinic upon receipt of the referral.

Is there a waiting list and how long is it?

Yes. The Child and Youth Clinic is staffed by occupational therapy students and has breaks in service throughout the year. Students take a while to become skilled and do not have the capacity to see a lot of children all at once therefore the rate at which children are taken off the waiting list varies unpredictably. The Clinic operates for 8 weeks at a time in every school term.

Are there other services that can help my child and I while we wait?

You are encouraged to speak to your child's GP about accessing some Medicare funding through the Chronic Disease Management Plan and the Better Access to Mental Health Care Plan (BAMHCP). Children who experience difficulties with anxiety, attention and behaviour challenges may be eligible for up to 12 sessions per calendar year under the BAMHCP and these can include psychologists and occupational therapists who are registered providers with the BAMCHP. Children do not need a formal mental health diagnosis to access funding under the BAMCHP.

If your child's circumstances change and his/her needs for therapy increase, please contact Cate Hilly (Clinical Placement Trainer) to discuss options including referral to other services.

What if I have further questions?

If you would like to discuss the nature of the Child and Youth Occupational Therapy Clinic, or your child's specific needs, please contact the USC Clinical Placement Trainer, Child and Youth Clinic, Cate Hilly, on 0409612884, or at chilly@usc.edu.au