

Supervision of Aides – Best Practice Model

This best practice model of Occupational Therapy regarding the supervision of aides is intended to safeguard the public by establishing guidelines that are consistent with expected professional standards.

Aides, or technicians, are individuals who provide supportive services to the occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant. Aides **are not** primary service providers and therefore, **do not** provide skilled occupational therapy services. An aide is trained by the occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant to perform specific tasks and must demonstrate competency to perform these tasks. Demonstration of the competencies must be documented as they relate to client and non-client related tasks.

Client related tasks are: routine tasks in which the aide is interacting with the client but does not act as a primary service provider of occupational therapy services (ex: transportation to and from therapy or assisting the patient through routine exercises).

Non-client related tasks include: clerical, maintenance and preparation of the equipment or work area.

The occupational therapist must oversee the development, documentation and implementation of a plan to supervise and routinely assess the ability of the aide to carry out these duties. The occupational therapy assistant may supervise the aide. When providing patient care, an aide will have direct on-site supervision.

The following factors must be present when an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant delegates a client-related task to the aide:

- the delegated task outcome is predictable
- the situation of the client and environment is stable and does not require – judgments, interpretations or adaptations
- the client previously demonstrated performance ability in the task
- the task has been clearly established and is routine

When the aide is performing client related tasks, the supervisor (occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant) must ensure the aide is:

- trained and able to demonstrate competency in carrying out the selected task and using equipment, if appropriate
- has been instructed on how to specifically carry out the delegated task with the specific client
- knows the precautions, signs and symptoms for that particular client that would indicate the need to seek assistance from a occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant

The supervision of the aide must be documented (in the department or personnel file) and must include:

- frequency and methods of supervision used
- content of supervision
- names and credentials of all persons participating in the supervisory process

Remember, patients require continuous monitoring and adjustments to treatment plans. Aides are to perform only those tasks that are routine in nature and do not require interpretation or professional judgment. Aides do not provide skilled occupational therapy services and are not primary service providers of occupational therapy.

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OT Advisory Committee of the Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision

Reference: AOTA – Model State Regulation for Supervision, Roles and Responsibilities during the Delivery of OT Services