

## What is Occupational Therapy?

**Occupational Therapists** Occupational therapy is a health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. Occupation refers to everything that people do during the course of everyday life (CAOT Position Statement on Everyday Occupations and Health, 2003).

**What They Do** The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the occupations, which give meaning and purpose to their lives. Occupational therapists have a broad education that provides them with the skills and knowledge to work collaboratively with people of all ages and abilities that experience obstacles to participation. These obstacles may result from a change in function (thinking, doing, feeling) because of illness or disability, and/or barriers in the social, institutional or and physical environment. (Adapted from the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2004).

Occupational therapists are generally employed in community agencies, health care organizations such as hospitals, chronic care facilities, rehabilitation centers and clinics, schools; social agencies industry or are self-employed. Some occupational therapists specialize in working with a specific age group or disability such as arthritis, developmental coordination disorder, mental illness, or spinal cord injury.

**Education** Occupational Therapists must meet training and educational standards in order to register to practice in Ontario. Occupational Therapists must have completed a university degree program in occupational therapy or equivalent, have successfully passed a national exam and be a member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.

*(Adapted with permission from the Practicing Physician Education Project 2006)*