O.T.'s Use of Technology throughout the Lifespan

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Early Childhood

How Can Cerebral Palsy Affect A Child?
- Muscle tone (stiffness or flaccidity) and muscle weakness, affecting positioning and play
- Balance and movement difficulty with delays in motor skills like sitting, crawling, and walking
- Problems in sensory processing with touch and movement discrimination, vision and hearing loss, sucking, swallowing and chewing which affect social interaction, communication, education, play and feeding

Grace at Age 5
Grace started kindergarten. In addition to out-patient care, Grace began receiving school-based therapy services, including:
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Physical Therapy

Occupational Therapy's Role With Technology in Early Childhood
Assess child's need and supervising the use of technology with difficulties or dysfunction in:
- Feeding
- Bathing and Dressing
- Communication
- Playing
- Mobility
- Positioning and handling
- Handwriting and classroom participation

Occupational Therapy also helps with:
- Securing funding for technology
- Family involvement with the use of technology

Funding Sources for Technology
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Private medical insurance
- Medicaid
- Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)
- State Assistive Technology Loan Programs
- Other funding sources such as: Lions, Masons and Kiwanis Clubs, United Way, United Cerebral Palsy Association, March of Dimes

Occupational Therapy Assessments
Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants observe children with cerebral palsy at home, during play, and at school. An experienced occupational therapy assistant can assist occupational therapists in:
- Assessing functions in activities of daily living
- Fine Motor function
- Gross Motor function
- Positioning for access of technology
- Determining need and measuring outcomes of assistive technology

Technology Used by Grace

Meet Grace
Grace was born at 30 weeks gestation weighing 3 pounds. She was feeding poorly, using a feeding tube to maintain her weight. Her physical therapist was concerned that her growth was not optimal. The occupational therapist introduced switches with which Grace can communicate her needs. She began using a switch and communicated to-enable her communication skills.