There’s No “I” in School-based PT  
with Karen Tartick, PT, CSCS

The adage, “There is no “I” in TEAM”, is the very best recommendation I can give as a school-based PT! Research from Effgen and Kaminker (2014) emphasizes the importance of team collaboration, which facilitates functional collaborative goals, to support the student more effectively throughout the school day. Recently, SeekFreaks, a website devoted to evidence and practice for school-based PTs, presented “5 Evidence-Supported Gifts for Teacher Appreciation Week” (May 2017) and cited research from Villeneuve (2009) regarding collaborative consultation with teachers which was especially reaffirming to me.

Integration of school-based PT into the school setting throughout each day, with the aim of providing functional, context-based goals and foster student independence and participation, is what many PTs struggle with in the schools. At Innovations in July, I will use videos to demonstrate how I integrate activities with ideas that have worked effectively for students from preschool to high school.

I will also present the barriers and challenges we all face, and how to deal with them effectively. Giangreco (1996) advocates services being “only as special as necessary” and teachers feel more supported when therapists collaborate on goals, and are present in the classroom. The success of what we do as school-based PTs is contingent upon being an equal team member, and the teachers I work with appreciate my help, because I am there in the natural setting, whether it be the art room, cafeteria, or wherever the real-life obstacles are encountered. Working with a school-based team has been so much more personally rewarding!

Trust Your Clinical Observations  
with Sue Cecere, PT, MHS

The importance of observing classroom activities and routines in your assessment of a student cannot be underestimated! Using your keen eye and experience as a therapist using a structured observation can be the answer to tease out what is impacting your student from fully benefiting from being in school. It is a student’s performance in arrival, dismissal, lunch recess etc. that makes or breaks their ability to participate with their peers. Here is an example of a structured observation or authentic assessment.

You can create your own tool to structure your observation based on a team concern or task-analyze a specific activity to determine what the student’s barrier to success is and what the most appropriate intervention might be. Here is an example of a task analysis that would support a student learning an arrival routine.

At Innovations, I will talk more on how to create your own and make it specific to your needs and or district. No normed standardized measure will provide you with the information you need in order to develop educationally relevant interventions and strategies that support your student in their least restrictive environment. But ecological assessment can! I will also talk on the impact of the ICF on our work, authentic/ecological assessment, educational relevance, useful outcome measures and embedded intervention. As PTs we are life-long learners – come learn some new tools to help you in your role as a school based therapist – and leave energized! I hope to see you there!
A Link Worth Bookmarking

with Carlo Vialu, PT, MBA

With my busy schedule, I am always happy to find online resources for myself and for educators. One link worth bookmarking is CanChild’s MATCH Flyers: A Resource for Educators. If you work with children with developmental coordination disorder (DCD), this is a must! Individuals with DCD have difficulty learning basic motor skills (Blank et al, 2012). This affects their participation and performance in school activities, such as handwriting, recreation and self-care.

To minimize the impact of such coordination difficulties to the child’s schooling, CanChild created the concept of MATCH: Modify the task, Alter the expectations, Teaching strategies, Change the environment, and Help by Understanding. MATCH focuses on modifying tasks and environment to accommodate the child’s difficulties and help them succeed. For every difficulty the teacher observes (e.g., leans on people or objects, especially during circle time), a MATCH flyer contains a list of specific suggestions.

CanChild has flyers for educators of every grade level from Kindergarten to Grades 7 and 8 and Adolescents. Download the flyers and share them. They are great tools when consulting and collaborating with teachers. You can also use the flyers for school trainings or meetings.

While there are specific tests to determine DCD, there are also short standardized functional tests you can use in school to help you assess, establish goals and plan interventions for students with DCD or other mobility issues. I will share these with you at Innovations in July. Hope to see you there!

Join Us at

Innovations in School-Based PT Practice

July 14-15, 2017 in Washington, DC

The APPT's 12th annual school-based conference is back in the east coast. It highlights advanced practice issues, in addition to foundational information provided yearly. Nationally recognized speakers will address federal laws, the provision of school-based PT services, & innovations in practice. Click here for details & registration.

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IDEA, Section 504 and A Recent Supreme Court Decision

with Mary Jane Rapport, PT, DPT, PhD

Providing School-Based Physical Therapy under IDEA & Section 504 is a session at the Innovations conference designed to benefit everyone from the most experienced school-based physical therapist to the novice who has never provided PT services to children in schools. By understanding fundamental concepts and requirements of federal law (statute) and policy (regulations) from the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, PTs are able to better understand and identify with their important role in facilitating participation of children with eligible conditions in the school environment. The session also explains differences in state and local laws and policies, eligibility for school-based PT services, and how to find the information needed when you have questions or concerns.

In March 2017, the US Supreme Court issued a rare decision related to special education, *Endrew F. v Douglas County School District RE-1* (137 S. Ct. 988 (2017)) . The decision addressed the 35 year old standard of “some educational benefit” established as the criteria in the Rowley decision (458 U.S. 176 (1982)) against which to measure a child’s progress in special education. A description of this case, and its relationship to PT as a related service, will be included in the session at this year’s conference.

Two great resources to keep abreast of federal law and policy related to IDEA and Section 504 are websites: idea.ed.gov and www.wrightslaw.com. Many aspects of the law rarely change, however there is something more to learn in this area every day. Knowledge of law and policy will help to ensure that physical therapists working in schools and with school-age children understand the appropriate options for service delivery both in and out of the school environment.
Washington, DC has been abuzz lately with daily reports emerging from the US Senate. The US House of Representatives passed the American Health Care Act (AHCA) on May 4th which is projected to eliminate Medicaid services provided as medically necessary related services in schools (HR 1628). The US Senate is currently reviewing changes to the AHCA, formerly the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In addition, the White House 2018 budget proposal reduces funding for children who receive medical services under Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Because Medicaid and CHIP serve nearly 40% of children nationwide, this could have a significant impact on the ability of school districts that access these funding sources to cover therapy services at school.

What can you do?
1. You can head to the Appalachian Trail, go off the grid and think, “I can’t make a difference”.
2. You can read more to understand the various aspects of Medicaid and CHIP, by researching or by subscribing to free reliable sources such as the Kaiser Family Foundation www.kff.org or www.modernhealthcare.com for email updates and informative articles. In addition, please read:
   “PCG Memorandum on the American Health Care Act” May 5, 2017
   “Schools Brace for Impact if Congress Cuts Medicaid Spending” Associated Press, May 14, 2017
   “APTA Federal Affairs Liaison Update” APTA Pediatric APTA website, May 4, 2017
3. You can contact your US Senators and your US House Representative.
4. For a brief overview of how bills become U. S. Law, http://www.house.gov/content/learn/legislative_process/
6. Additionally, if you are interested in taking more leadership in our organization’s legislative effort, you can contact your state PT association and ask about becoming a Federal Affairs Liaison for your state. Maria Jones, PT, PhD, our APTA Federal Affairs Liaison has shared details:

Federal Affairs Liaisons (FAL)
Federal Affairs Liaisons (FALs) serve as the link between their component and APTA's Government Affairs Department on federal issues. Each APTA chapter and section president selects one member to serve as that component's Federal Affairs Liaison for a term of one year. FALs are responsible for providing grassroots input to the APTA's Government Affairs Department, and for disseminating information to their component.

FAL Roles & Responsibilities:
- Provide input from the chapter / section to APTA’s government affairs staff
- Disseminate information to the grassroots membership from the APTA Board of Directors and government affairs staff
- Assist in identification of potential APTA key contacts from your chapter. FALs to APTA sections do not have this responsibility since Key Contacts are identified at the state level
- Attend regular component meetings to relay legislative and regulatory information
- Help recruit participants for APTA advocacy events, such as the Federal Advocacy Forum, rallies, practice visits, fundraisers, or other grassroots activities
- Coordinate practice visits in your state by bringing members of Congress into different PT practice settings
- Attend political events, with the assistance of PT-PAC in your state
- Coordinate with the state legislative chairperson on component grassroots networks, policy development, and identification of emerging issues

You may also read Maria Jones’ recent article on the Affordable Care Act here. US Senator, Lamar Alexander (Tennessee) is heading the discussion on the AHCA. He has requested more input from the public, from professionals, and from women in particular. I’ve corresponded with my Senators. Please consider contacting your representatives. They want to know what needs to be saved in Medicaid, and, if you have suggestions for what might be changed, offer those ideas as well.