



Guidelines for Physical Therapy Referral

Common diagnoses for Physical Therapy referral:

Cerebral Palsy	Down Syndrome
Developmental Delay	Sensory Integration
Orthopedic Injuries	Fine Motor Deficits
Torticollis	Plagiocephaly
Muscular Dystrophy	Spina Bifida
“Clumsy Child”- Developmental Coordination Disorder	
Sports Related Injuries	

Indicators Associated with These Diagnoses:

Cerebral Palsy:

Weak or Stiff Muscles
Avoids using one or both arms or legs

Plagiocephaly/Torticollis:

Has flattening on one side of head or holds head to one side
Cannot lift head up while lying on stomach

Developmental Delay:

Has not met two or more developmental milestones
Appears floppy or stiff

Sensory Integration:

Walks by slapping feet on ground
Toe Walking
Appears fearful if moved
Has poor balance
Difficulty sitting still during class or paying attention
Overly sensitive to touch
Overly or under cautious with fast moving or spinning activities
Difficulty orienting body effectively for dressing like putting arms in sleeves, fingers in mittens, toes in socks
Avoids manipulating small objects or activities involving scissors, crayons, pencils and markers or uses incorrectly

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“Clumsy Child”- Developmental Coordination Disorder

- Cannot imitate movements
- Cannot jump with two feet
- Seems clumsy or awkward during movements
- Has poor balance
- Difficulty sitting still during class or paying attention
- Bumps into other kids or objects unintentionally
- Cannot skip or run
- Cannot catch a ball
- “Pops up” from sitting or lying and “plops down” to sitting or lying-poor control
- Feels heavy when moved
- Associated sensory integration issues (see above)

Fine Motor Deficits:

- Has not establish a definite hand preference by preschool
- Holds crayons, pencils and markers with a fist grip
- Leans on forearms while coloring or eating or props self up with arms
- Cannot manipulate scissors by school age
- Early walking with little or no crawling

Sports Related Injuries:

Associated with Dance, Cheerleading, Football, Soccer, Volleyball, etc.

- Mild to Moderate sprains or strains
- Overuse or improper body mechanics for sport
- Weakness or decreased range of motion required for sport



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