



# Occupational Therapy Job Description

## Family Health Team



### Preamble

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A number of problems exist in the current primary care system, such as difficulties accessing care, wait times and poor integration with other parts of the health care system. Especially for clients with complex health needs, such as those with disabilities and chronic diseases; new models of health care are required to facilitate access, quality, continuity, integration and satisfaction with care. (McColl 2008)

“One of the approaches most commonly advocated for improving access and quality of primary care is to involve other professionals in collaboration with family physicians. This approach is intended to create efficiencies in the utilization of physician human resource, while granting patients access to additional expertise. Emerging models such as chronic disease management provide an excellent vehicle for allied health professionals, particularly occupational therapists, to contribute to the overall health of patients in primary care.” (McColl 2008)

Inter-professional collaboration between health care providers allows for the complement of each provider’s unique set of skills and knowledge in order to provide an optimal level of care, more efficient use of resources and better satisfaction for both clients and providers. (CAOT, 2006)

Occupational Therapy is described as the art and science of enabling engagement in everyday living through occupation; enables people to perform the occupations that foster health and well-being, enable a just and inclusive society so that all people may participate to their potential in the daily occupations of life. (CAOT 2006) According to the *Guide to Interdisciplinary Roles and Responsibilities* dated July 4, 2005, “Occupational Therapists complete assessments designed to identify the factors that may be contributing to the individual’s difficulty with or loss of function. Based on the assessment, occupational therapists provide treatment plans designed to help the individual to perform daily tasks and to develop the skills to live independent and productive lives.”

As an Occupational Therapist in a primary health care setting of a Family Health Team, the role of the Occupational Therapist can be considered one of a ‘generalist’. A focus is placed upon chronic disease management for clients of all ages, across the life span, of a busy Family Medical Practice in London, Ontario, caseload of up to 18,000 clients.

## **Job description – occupational therapist in primary health care setting**

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The Occupational Therapy position proposed would be a full-time equivalent position. The successful candidate will perform client-centered practice within the Family Health Team in collaboration with other health professionals of the team. The Occupational Therapist will receive referrals from members of the team, prioritize and arrange for initial screening, assessments and meetings as required, working with the available support staff of the team. Based upon the results of the initial assessment, treatment, and/or referral to appropriate community agency or partner, is completed in a timely manner. This will involve an understanding of services, programs and resources available in the community in order to reduce duplication and further enhance quality and timeliness of service delivery.

Several roles may include (but not limited to) developmental screening for infants and children, consultation on childhood disorders, assessment for varying assistive devices and applicable funding available, completion of forms in order for clients to access varying benefits related to insurance or government funding, cognitive and/or perceptual evaluations, ergonomic assessments, return to work and/or school accommodations, functional assessment for return to work, hand therapy assessments and splinting, support for caregivers, case management, pain management, community resource linkage, home safety assessments, falls prevention, palliative care in the home, seating and mobility consultation and facilitating inter-professional collaboration. Participation in varying Educational endeavors as required such as supervision of students or presenting and sharing information as requested. Further roles in Occupational Therapy may also be developed as the need arises or is identified, including Health Promotion Projects, or Program Development. Documentation in the electronic clinical chart is required and a laptop will be provided. The successful Occupational Therapist will also be encouraged to participate in relevant continuing education in order to provide the most up to date, evidenced based and relevant care possible.

## **Qualifications and Experience**

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The successful candidate will be a registered member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. A minimum of 5 years experience is preferred, with experience in numerous areas of Occupational Therapy practice. Excellent communication and inter-professional collaboration skills are a must. Must possess a valid driver's license and have access to own method of reliable transportation. Must be self-directed with an entrepreneurial approach to delivery of services, with good computer skills, present self in a professional manner and use sound clinical judgment in the delivery of client-centered Occupational Therapy, within the scope of the Occupational Therapy profession.

## **Accountability**

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The successful candidate will be accountable to the Guidelines of Occupational Therapy Practice as outlined by the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario and to the director of the Family Health Team.

### **Case-Finding/ Referral Source**

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Referrals may be made through varying team members within the Family Health Team and as such prioritizing same is required for effective delivery of care and for effective use of clinical time.

As Occupational Therapy is a new role to be part of a Family Health Team, education of the inter-professional team regarding the Occupational Therapy role may be required in order to ensure referrals are made for relevant issues. As such, case finding may be required in order to promote an ongoing referral system that allows consistent client access to Occupational Therapy and hence benefits the health of our clients.

## References

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Family Health Teams. *Advancing Primary Health Care: Guide to Interdisciplinary Team Roles and Responsibilities* (July 2005).

McColl, M.A. (2008). *A Framework to Build your Practice in Primary Health Care*. CAOT.

McColl, M.A. and Dickenson, J. (2009). *Inter-Professional Primary Health Care: Assembling the Pieces: A Framework to Build your Practice in Primary Health Care*. CAOT Publications ACE.

- This resource was developed and provided by Kerrie Dewachter, OT of London, Ontario.