New Jersey Department of Education
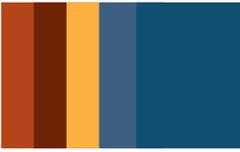
Chapter 14, Special Education

Office of Special Education

Division of Educational Services

May 3, 2023

Chapter 14

- This chapter sets forth the rules and regulations for providing students with disabilities a free, appropriate, public education.

- The Department is proposing two limited amendments to ensure students continue to receive all the services to which they are entitled.

Current Language

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.9(a)(4)

4. … and physical therapy may be provided by therapy assistants **under the direction** of the certified and, where required, licensed therapist in accordance with all applicable State statutes and rules.

N.J.A.C. 6A:5.1(c)(1)(iii)(2)

iii. Related services;

(2) Physical therapy assistants shall work in the **presence and under the supervision** of a certified physical therapist.

Physical Therapists & PTAs *(slide 1 of 2)*

- Physical Therapy Assistants (PTAs) are currently permitted through special education regulations to provide physical therapy as a related service.

Physical Therapist	Physical Therapy Assistant
• Minimum of Master's Degree in physical therapy • Successful completion of clinical requirements • Successful completion of written exam	• At Least an Associate in Arts Degree • Completion of two-year physical therapy assistant program • Completed all clinical requirements • Successful completion of written exam

New Jersey Administrative Code Title 13 Law and Public Safety

Chapter 39A – State Board of Physical Therapy

13:39A-2.3 AUTHORIZED ROLE OF A LICENSED PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

a) A licensed physical therapist assistant may initiate physical therapy treatment <mark>only at the direction of and under the direct or general supervision of a licensed physical therapist</mark>. A licensed physical therapist assistant shall not initiate physical therapy treatment upon the direction of a physician or other authorized health care provider without the direct or general supervision of a licensed physical therapist.

"General supervision" means supervision by a physical therapist in which the supervising physical therapist is available at all times by telecommunications but is not required to be on-site for direction and supervision. The supervising physical therapist shall assess, on an ongoing basis, the ability of the physical therapist assistant to perform the selected interventions as directed.

Scope of Work of a PTA

- May initiate treatment only at the direction of and the supervision of a physical therapist.

- Document provision of treatment in the record. *The physical therapist will review and cosign the entries.*

- The PTA may collect data about a student. *Interpretation of the data is only made by the supervising physical therapist.*

- The PTA may **NOT** perform an assessment, make a diagnosis, develop a plan of care, or modify a plan of care.

Proposed Amendments N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.9(a)(4)

Current Language

4. … and physical therapy may be provided by therapy assistants under the direction of the certified and, where required, licensed therapist in accordance with all applicable State statutes and rules.

Proposed Language

4. …and physical therapy may be provided by therapy assistants under the [direction] **supervision** of the certified, and, were required, licensed therapist in accordance with all applicable State statutes and rules.

Current Language

iii. Related services;

(2) Physical therapy assistants shall work in the presence and under the supervision of a certified physical therapist.

Proposed Language

iii. Related services;

(2) Physical therapy assistants shall work [in the presence and] under the supervision of a certified physical therapist.

Proposed Amendments N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.9

Adding new language that will allow school districts to provide students with disabilities the related services required by their IEPs through virtual or remote platforms in limited circumstances:

- ❑ The student is unable to attend school because of a temporary or chronic medical condition.

- ❑ The student is unable to attend school because the student's school building or district is closed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9 and the school district has implemented its program of virtual or remote instruction.

Considerations

- Regulations would permit, not require, related services to be provided virtually. Families and LEAs would need to determine it would be best for the student.

- The flexibility to provide related services virtually when a student is unable to attend school in-person due to a temporary or chronic medical condition will ensure continuity of services, prevent regression and allow the student to make progress toward goals and objectives in the IEP.

Current Research

- The United States Department of Education recently released a topical briefer which states that research and data suggest that the provision of related services virtually can be as effective as services delivered in person.

- Research on the provision of physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language therapy and counseling services remotely indicates a student benefit.

- Research-documented benefits include increased collaboration between families and providers, decreased time away from instruction and an opportunity for students to generalize skills in other settings.

Thank You!

New Jersey Department of Education: nj.gov/education

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