

Eastern Illinois Area of Special Education  
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**POSITION DESCRIPTION: Physical Therapist Assistant**

PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT:	Department of Rehabilitation Services
HOURLY/SALARY:	Salary
JOB CLASSIFICATION:	Confidential Employee
SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES:	District students being served
REPORTS TO:	Program Supervisor-Rehabilitation
TERM OF EMPLOYMENT:	180 days or per individual contract

**JOB SUMMARY:**

The physical therapist assistant is responsible for assisting the Physical Therapist in providing physical therapy services and to perform such procedures delegated to the assistant that are commensurate with the assistant's education and training. The physical therapist assistant is responsible for student growth and learning to enable students to benefit from their educational experience; motivate pupils to develop skills, attitudes, knowledge, and habits needed as a foundation for future learning; and must establish a good relationship with parents and with other staff members.

**ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS:**

The physical therapist assistant shall:

1. Be able to communicate effectively and professionally with students, parents, teachers and the general public including persons from diverse cultural backgrounds and especially those with varying degrees of abilities including those with disabilities.
2. Be able to make involved and varied mathematical computations rapidly and accurately involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, and decimals. This employee must be able to calculate figures and amounts such as rates, ratios, and percentages, be able to draw and interpret graphs.
3. Be able to use reasoning ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information. This employee must be able to solve complex and ambiguous problems in both predictable and unpredictable situations and be able to interpret and apply a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.
4. Be able to relate, understand, and communicate with others in a way that contributes to harmonious relationships and goal accomplishment. This employee must establish order, maintain discipline, and provide a safe and nurturing environment for pupils. This employee also must be able to maintain purposeful activities in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

5. Be emotionally, mentally, and physically capable of performing the essential functions of the job.
6. This employee must be free of any dangerous, infectious, or communicable disease that is likely to be transmitted to children or others in the course of employment. This employee must be physically and emotionally able to assist children with disabilities and others in an emergency.
7. Be dependable, honest, and trustworthy. This employee must have never been convicted of a felony or other crime involving dishonesty, alcohol, drugs, or sexual misconduct. This employee must be committed to the service of others and always act in the student's and the district's best interest.
8. Have a valid certificate of licensure, issued by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

### **ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:**

To perform this job successfully, an individual must satisfactorily perform each of the essential job requirements listed below. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform his or her job functions. A qualified individual is a person who, with or without reasonable accommodations for his or her disability, meets the essential qualifications and can perform the essential job functions of his or her position of employment.

The physical therapist assistant shall:

- 1.a. Be able to read, comprehend, and apply complex, multi-step written instructions that are characteristic of textbook manuals, curriculum guides, computer programs, memos, technical manuals, and other written materials, job descriptions, work rules, special education rules and regulations, and Board of Education policies and regulations.
- 1.b. Be able to talk, listen, and understand conversations and effectively present information and respond to questions from students, staff, or the general public. This employee must be able to effectively communicate in multidisciplinary staffings, IEP meetings, and special education due process hearings.
- 1.c. Be able to write understandable, logical, sequential, and well-organized special education reports and correspondence.
- 2.a. Possess knowledge of the role of school based physical therapy and be able to apply physical therapy principles of practice to solve problems and express ideas across disciplines. This employee must be able to prepare, and implement physical therapy intervention procedures in accordance with the IEP; and evaluate students' growth and achievement in line with IEP goals.
- 2.b. Be able to perform mathematical calculations in order to calculate levels of achievement.
- 2.c. This person must be able to interpret physical therapy standardized assessment results, including statistical data in chart or graph form, and communicate complex statistical measurements in simple terms.
- 3.a. Closely supervise students, being especially alert and responsive in unstructured situations such as transitions between classes, etc. Be able to maintain student safety in physically challenging tasks and circumstances.
- 3.b. Implement low-profile strategies for correcting minor or major instances of misbehavior in a variety of situations.
- 3.c. Assume responsibility for the safety, well-being, and productivity of students.

- 3.d. Be prompt and thorough in completing assignments and attend to details accurately and efficiently. This employee must be flexible; able to tolerate frequent interruptions and changing demands in an active work environment. This person must be able to see the total picture and to prioritize tasks in order of importance and alter and refine plans quickly when the need arises.
- 3.e. Make reasonable and prudent judgments in regard to mandated child abuse reporting to DCFS.
- 3.f. Make reasonable and prudent administrative decisions in the absence of an administrator regarding student injuries or illness, consulting with building staff/administration in cancelling treatment in order to protect student health/safety.
- 3.g. Anticipate problems and apply knowledge in predictable and unpredictable situations. This person must be able to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions.
- 4.a. Demonstrate an approach of warmth, patience, good humor, and understanding with students and others especially those with severe social, emotional, physical, behavioral and learning disabilities.
- 4.b. Instruct students in a professional manner in the acquisition of gross motor skill.
- 4.c. Demonstrate a positive attitude, good humor, and a reasonable sense of control over situations that helps convey the attitude that school can be fun and rewarding.
- 4.d. Work in a courteous, cooperative, and professional manner with co-workers and other employees, parents, and the public, continuously meeting multiple demands from several people
- 4.e. Be attired in clothing appropriate to the position and be clean and well groomed.
- 5.a. Use vision, hearing, and other senses to instantly assess situations in regard to student's safety, observe individual student performance, and monitor student progress.
- 5.b. Be able to hear and understand conversations in an environment where the noise level is usually quiet, but occasionally moderately loud.
- 5.c. Be able to reach with hands and arms and fingers, handle or feel objects, instructional materials, tools, equipment, or controls such as, pencils and pens, telephone, technical manuals, computer keyboards, etc.
- 5.d. Be physically capable of independently lifting instructional materials and equipment weighing up to 25 lbs., repeatedly throughout the work day, and occasionally lifting students or pushing, pulling or otherwise moving as much as 50 lbs. Be able to perform physical movements, such as bending, kneeling, and moving to and from the floor, to deliver therapy services. Carry objects of up to 15 pounds across level and uneven surfaces, indoors and outdoors.
- 5.e. Planning and Preparation

The physical therapist shall demonstrate knowledge of content and pedagogy by:

- Displaying solid knowledge of important concepts in the discipline, including anatomy and physiology underlying motor skill acquisition and motor function, accurate understanding of the hierarchy of motor development, prerequisite relationships and familiarity with a wide range of effective therapy approaches
- Using an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan to guide instruction, develop and implement therapy ensuing from IEP goals that are sequenced to facilitate learning and skill acquisition

The physical therapist assistant shall demonstrate knowledge of students by:

- Understanding the active nature of student learning, creating therapeutic relationships based on current levels of development of individual students/ groups

- Acquiring knowledge from several sources about students development and varied approaches to meet learning, knowledge and skills acquisition, special needs, interests, and cultural heritage

The physical therapist assistant shall demonstrate knowledge of resources by:

- Displaying awareness of resources beyond those provided by the school or EIASE, including technology/Internet for classroom use and for extending one's professional skills, and seeks out such resources.

The physical therapist assistant shall design coherent therapy services by:

- Preparing learning activities that are aligned and sequential to therapy outcomes
- Preparing learning activities with reasonable time allocations
- Preparing evidence-based therapy interventions designed to improve independent functioning in gross motor coordination, performance of therapeutic exercise, pre-ambulation, transfer, ambulation, and other mobility methods.
- Fitting, adjusting, and training students in the use and care of orthoses, prostheses, and other supportive devices.
- Preparing therapy activities to address functional, pre-vocational, daily living, sensorimotor, recreational, and social activity needs.
- Preparing learning activities/therapy programs with differentiation for individual student's needs.
- Understanding and appropriately using direct service, monitoring, and consultative models of service delivery.

The physical therapist assistant shall plan for paraprofessionals by:

- Communicating expectations to paraprofessionals
- Following physical therapist guidance, planning activities that are appropriate for paraprofessionals to implement during the day.

#### 5.f. Therapeutic Environment

The physical therapist assistant shall create an educational environment of respect and rapport by:

- Demonstrating friendliness, caring and respect in therapist- student interactions.
- Ensuring interactions are appropriate to the ages, culture, and developmental level of students
- Responding to disrespectful behavior between students.

The physical therapist assistant shall establish a culture for learning by:

- Holding high expectations for both learning and hard work
- Ensuring students understand their roles as learners/ partners in their therapy.

The physical therapist assistant shall manage therapy sessions by:

- Establishing effective routines and procedures with little loss of therapy time.
- Adequately scheduling student contacts with regard for maximizing student contact and minimizing travel.

The physical therapist assistant shall manage student behavior by:

- Monitoring student behavior
- Responding to student behavior consistently, respectfully, and effectively
- Closely supervising students, being especially alert and responsive in unstructured situations such as transition between classes, etc.
- Collaborating with staff in developing an FBA and BIP when appropriate
- Complying with the implementation of the BIP in therapy sessions. The physical therapist assistant shall organize physical space by:

- Establishing a safe environment, ensuring that the furniture and equipment selection and arrangement is appropriate to the therapy session for individual students.
- Seeking assistance from the physical therapist or administrator when the environment is a barrier to the student participation or achievement of therapy goals.
- Planning for acquisition and/or construction of individual materials (such as orthotics, mobility devices, positioning equipment) as necessary to implement therapy.

5.g. Instruction

The physical therapist assistant shall communicate with students by:

- Clearly communicating the instructional purpose of the activity or exercise.
- Ensuring that the explanation the activity or exercise is scaffolded, clear, accurate and connects with students' knowledge and experience
- Ensuring that spoken and written language is clear, correct and suitable to students' age and interests

The physical therapist assistant shall engage students in treatment by:

- Designing therapy sessions that are aligned with the instructional outcomes and designed to challenge student intellectual and physical engagement.
- Developing therapy sessions that have a clearly defined structure and pacing appropriate to individual needs.
- Understanding and responding to verbal and nonverbal communication expressed by the student. Using questions/ discussion as appropriate to facilitate student engagement.

The physical therapist assistant shall use assessment during therapy sessions by:

- Clearly stating target performance.
- Using assessment and observational regularly for-evidence of positive change in performance.
- Providing feedback to students that is accurate and specific. Engaging some students in self-assessment as appropriate.

The physical therapist assistant shall demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness by:

- Making minor adjustments to therapy when needed
- Accommodating students' questions and interests, drawing on a broad repertoire of strategies.
- Persisting in reaching students who have difficulty learning.

The physical therapist assistant shall supervise paraprofessional instruction of students by:

- Frequently monitoring paraprofessional instructional performance of therapy support activities.
- Frequently demonstrating procedures to paraprofessionals assigned to implement support activities under the physical therapist's supervision
- Providing in-service education to staff in support of therapy programs

5.h. Professional Responsibilities

The physical therapist assistant shall reflect on therapy services by:

- Accurately assessing therapy effectiveness and the extent to which it achieved instructional outcomes
- Making specific suggestions for improvement

The physical therapist assistant shall maintain accurate records by:

- Effectively establishing systems for maintaining information on student completion of student progress in therapy and non-instructional records such as weekly schedule, contact hours, student attendance, and third party billing.
- Submitting records in a timely manner

- Requiring all support staff to assist in data collection.

The physical therapist assistant shall communicate with families by:

- Providing frequent and appropriate information to families about the therapy program and student progress in a culturally sensitive manner
- Making some attempt to engage families in the I therapy program by participating in parent conferences, making home visits, or serving as a resource person.

The physical therapist shall participate in the professional community by:

- Establishing relationships with colleagues characterized by mutual support and cooperation
- Actively participating in professional inquiry by seeking and using evidence-based interventions.
- Voluntarily and substantially participating in and contributing to school events and school and EIASE projects.
- Maintaining professional relationships with medical personnel in order to coordinate treatment and determine student needs. Updating physicians regarding student status and obtaining medical consent for services for students requiring such consent.

The physical therapist shall grow and develop professionally by:

- Seeking opportunities for professional development to enhance knowledge and skill
- Actively engaging with colleagues and supervisors in professional conversation and feedback about practice, participate in sharing evidenced-based practice ideas, special talents, and/or experiences cooperatively with colleagues.
- Actively participating in assisting other educators
- Seeking ways to contribute to the profession

The physical therapist assistant shall show professionalism by:

- Displaying high standards of honesty, integrity and confidentiality in interactions with colleagues, students and the public
- Actively ensuring that all students receive a fair opportunity to succeed
- Maintaining an open mind in team and departmental decisions
- Complying with school and EIASE regulations
- Accepting constructive feedback from supervisors and acting on recommendations.
- Being consistently punctual, professionally dressed and practice good hygiene

The physical therapist assistant shall supervise the professionalism of paraprofessionals by:

- Consistently monitoring paraprofessional behavior
- Promptly addressing any unprofessional behavior displayed by a paraprofessional and reporting unprofessional behavior to the Rehabilitation Department administrator.

6a. The Physical therapist assistant shall safeguard district equipment, materials and facilities; use time and resources effectively by scheduling, completing necessary paperwork, or conferring with other professionals.

6b. The physical therapist shall respect confidentiality and restricted information, such as information found in student records.

6e. The physical therapist assistant shall be regular and punctual in job attendance.

#### **ADDITIONAL DUTIES:**

In addition to the essential job functions as listed above, this employee shall perform such additional duties as requested by the supervisor or administrator including, but not limited to the following:

- Be physically capable of lifting loads of up to 50 lbs. independently, and assisting with other staff when the load is over 50 lbs.
- Be able to participate in departmental planning, budgeting, and policy formation regarding physical therapy services as requested by program supervisor.
- Be able to effectively supervise a Physical Therapy Assistant student, or volunteer.
- Perform other duties as assigned by administration.
- Create and maintain an efficient itinerant schedule, being flexible to changes