

## Guidelines for Determining Frequency of Therapy

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **How often and how long will my child's therapy last?**

The therapist will make a suggestion for how often and how long your child needs skilled therapy services. The therapist will work with you to create a plan of care for your child. Many issues are considered:

- Your child's ability to benefit and participate in therapy.
- Your ability as a parent to participate in therapy sessions and to follow through with activities in the home and community.
- Your family's decision related to available resources (i.e. time commitment, availability, transportation and financial resources).

#### **Do I need to be present for my child's therapy session?**

A main goal of therapy is to give you education and ideas you can use at home. This will help your child get the most from therapy. It is vital that the child's parent or primary caregiver be present during each therapy session. Each therapy program is planned to meet the unique needs of your child. We require a parent or primary caregiver to take part in the therapy program.



### *Frequency of Therapy*

The focus of therapy is to equip children and their families with the knowledge and skills needed to manage daily challenges after therapy has ended. The goal of therapy is to help each child develop the skills necessary for the job of living.

Therapy programs are short term with clearly identified functional goals.

Progress toward these goals is assessed continuously and the determination is made at least every three months as to whether or not therapy is still necessary.

Studies have shown that children achieve targeted goals, acquire functional skills and show accelerated rates of developmental progress when parents and professionals work together. We believe you are the key to your child's success.

Therapists use *Guidelines for Determining the Frequency of Therapy* to help decide how often and for how long therapy services are needed.

There are four frequencies of therapy used: *Intensive, Weekly/Bimonthly, Periodic* and *Consultative*.

***Intensive Therapy*** - Three to 11 visits each week



This frequency is for children who need intensive therapy and have immediate and complex needs.

- Intensive Therapy is frequent, for a limited length of time, and for children who are quickly moving toward their goals.
- Intensive Therapy is also for children at risk for losing function due to a current medical condition.
- Changes to the therapy plan are made often and intense family education is provided.

**Weekly/Bimonthly Therapy** - One to two times each week or every other week

This frequency is for children who need frequent therapy and are making continuous progress toward their goals.

- The child needs to see a skilled therapist for regular visits for a limited time.
- Parents learn to safely perform exercises and activities with their child.
- A routine home program is being established.

**Periodic Therapy** - Monthly or at regularly scheduled intervals

This frequency is best for children who show slower progress toward their goals and for caregivers who are able to safely carry out a routine home program.

- Periodic sessions with a therapist are needed to check on function, provide treatment and update the home program.

**Consultative Therapy** - As necessary

Once your child has been discharged from therapy, consultative services are available as necessary.

These services may be needed when:

- Your child improves or regresses.
- Medical interventions that occur in stages are planned.
- Your child is ready to perform a new task as a result of changes in age, developmental stage, life cycle, physical environment or social environment.
- New assistive technology is available

When appropriate, re-enrollment in therapy for a defined period of time may be recommended.

**Changing Frequencies and Ending Therapy**

Transitioning from one frequency of therapy to another is to be expected. Transition occurs when your child moves from one life stage to another, from one functional level to another, from one program to another or from one environment to another (i.e. going from hospital inpatient to home, going from preschool to school).

Discharge occurs when:

- Expected goals and results have been reached.
- The family chooses not to continue therapy.
- Therapy services no longer produce a functional and measurable outcome.

**Reference:** Bailes, Reder, Burch. Development of Guidelines for Determining Frequency of Therapy Services in a Pediatric Medical Setting. *Pediatric Physical Therapy*. 2008