TITLE: Physical Therapist

QUALIFICATIONS: Illinois Licensure as a Physical Therapist

REPORT TO: Director of Special Education, Assistant Director, and Coordinators

FUNCTION: The Physical Therapist understands the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education. The Physical Therapist understands how students differ in their approaches to learning; creates learning/skill building opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners; understands planning; and designs services based on knowledge of the discipline, student, community, and curriculum goals; of all students ages three through twenty-one; so that daily living activities/gross and fine motor development can be enhanced.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Professional Knowledge and Application

The Physical Therapist understands the philosophical, theoretical, historical, and legal foundations of special education. The Physical Therapist understands how students differ in their approaches to learning; creates social/emotional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners; understands planning; and designs therapy services based on knowledge of the discipline, student, community, and curriculum goals; of all students ages three through twenty-one.

The Physical Therapist:

- Understands current legislation, regulations, policies, litigation, and ethical issues related to the provision of educational therapy services, including least restrictive environment, due process, assessment, discipline, transition, supplemental services and supports, specialized health care and assistive technology, to individuals with all types of disabilities across the age range.

- Demonstrates through planning and preparation, extensive skill and knowledge in the area of Physical Therapy. Develops physical/motor focused plans based on student needs and evaluation results.

- Collaborates with other disciplines to ensure team understanding of student physical/motor performance strengths and needs, through evaluation, educational program planning, and service delivery.

- Understands characteristics of individuals with disabilities across the age range, including levels of severity and multiple disabilities and their influence on development, behavior and learning; with knowledge about the impact of language disorders, processing deficits, intellectual cognitive abilities, behavioral/emotional/social disorders, and physical...
• Plans and prepares therapy specific to individual student’s level, learning style, and cultural background as well as to the characteristics of the task and environment.

• Provides on-going consultation to teachers and educational personnel regarding strategies specific to supporting student development and implementation/utilization of skills through IEP’s or Response to Intervention.

• Maintains strong knowledge of typical motor, cognitive, and social developmental characteristics of each age, expectations of general developmental patterns and the extent to which each student follows patterns and uses this knowledge in the development, adjustment, and refinement of plans/presentation of tasks.

• Understanding of the Common Core and effective therapy strategies and resources for teaching the scope and sequence in the academic, communication, social, and vocational curricular domains in the general curriculum.

• Develops observable/measurable goals that identify current levels of ability/performance and expected outcomes through growth, while assisting the team in clear wording to document student progress towards established benchmarks/objectives.

• Makes appropriate service delivery times that are clear and specific to individual students and skill abilities.

• Consists of strong organizational skills and flexibility to establish and maintain appropriate schedules for direct service, consultation, and assessment.

• Utilizes strong organizational skills and flexibility to establish and maintain appropriate schedules for direct service, consultation, and assessment.

• Monitors, inventories, and helps maintain PT equipment. Provides in-service and consults with staff regarding appropriate use of equipment and safety procedures.

B. Delivery of Service and Practices

The Physical Therapist understands the central concepts and methods of inquiry; uses a variety of assessment strategies to develop and encourage students’ development of motor, physical, academic, behavioral, and social-emotional performance skills to support the continuous development of all students ages three through twenty-one.

The Physical Therapist:

• Effectively utilizes a variety of therapy strategies for adapting or modifying the general curriculum to meet the needs of individual students. Implements strategies utilizing longitudinal, outcome-based skill levels with the identification of priorities, including social, language, academic, motoric, sensory, cognitive and vocational skills across life skill domains (i.e. domestic, recreation/leisure, vocational, and community); and uses appropriate measurement tools to assist in the assessment of strategies.
• Creates and presents therapy activities and provides consultation suggestions that are highly relevant to students and IEP goals; follows an organized progression, and reflects recent professional research. Adjusts the scope and rigor of therapy sessions based upon student progress and capabilities; with consideration of age, diversity, sensory needs and medical implications as part of the therapy sessions.

• Delivers therapy sessions that are adequately paced allowing for on-going adjustments. Overall therapy time is efficiently utilized and is adjusted within the course of the school day/week.

C. Assessment

The Physical Therapist understands the educational assessment process and uses various assessment and therapy strategies to support the continuous development of all students ages three through twenty-one.

The Physical Therapist:

• Demonstrates strong knowledge of formal and informal assessment techniques and develops/monitors appropriate modifications/interventions within the educational environment.

• Evaluates the student’s ability and formulates the student’s physical profile through a variety of functional, behavioral and standardized assessments, skilled observation, consultation, checklists, histories, and interviews.

• Synthesizes evaluation results into a comprehensive written report which reflects strengths and barriers to student participation in the educational environment; directs program development and guides evidence-based school therapy intervention.

• Demonstrates strong understanding of data analysis, evaluation, and interpretation to appropriately determine educational programming within the least restrictive environment. Supports continual assessment, development of modifications and instructional strategies to best meet student needs.

• Skillfully documents and records accurate student assessment data on an on-going basis; respecting confidentiality.

D. Learning Environment

The Physical Therapist uses an understanding of individual, group motivation and behavior to create a therapy environment that encourages positive social interaction, respect and rapport. This environment creates a positive culture with active engagement in learning and self-motivation while managing classroom procedures and student behavior.

The Physical Therapist:

• Establishes standards of conduct by effectively implementing classroom and individual behavioral management plans and is able to monitor students in a subtle and preventative manner; engages students in self-monitoring.

• Establishes clear and consistent procedures for all aspects of referrals and assessments in collaboration with administration and teachers.

• Understands the characteristics of environments, including materials, equipment, and spatial arrangements, that facilitate development, learning and interaction among students with extensive knowledge of modifications within the learning/therapy setting to meet student needs.
• Skillfully evaluates the environment on an ongoing basis and maintains a learning environment that meets the needs of students as they grow, develop, or experience medical or physical changes.

• Creates physical space for services and assessment that is highly organized and inviting; respecting aspects of organization, schedules, routines and transitions that promote development and learning.

• Provides a routine and consistently adjusts the routine/structure to meet the needs of individual students.

• Understands ways in which technology can assist with creating and managing the learning environment, incorporating the verbal and visual redirection and classroom expectations and provides/seeks consultation/collaboration with Assistive Technology Specialists.

E. Collaborative Relationships

The Physical Therapist understands his or her role as a professional, establishing high standards of reciprocal collaborative relationships with students, families, community and educational personnel, and provides continual leadership in development of relationship building. The Physical Therapist understands self-reflection, the importance of active participation in problem solving teams; importance of the development of programs or systems of care that support and enhance the health, social and emotional well-being, and safety of students.

The Physical Therapist:

• Works collaboratively with community agencies and outside therapists for students when appropriate, and understands the reciprocal relationship of sharing confidential information with these individuals.

• Continually assesses and takes a leadership role in communicating to problem solve with staff to best meet the physical needs of students.

• Maintains appropriate documentation of family/teacher communications displaying high priority of communication between home and school as well as timely communication with teachers and educational personnel within the building.

• Consults and collaborates with other school personnel in gathering and giving information in establishing and planning for respective roles in the modification of the student’s sensory, motor, and functional needs.

• Provides leadership to support students in establishing collaborative relationships with peers, adults and development of advocating for self as to the functional skills/needs students have within the educational setting and generalization to the community.

F. Professional Conduct, Leadership, and Professional Growth

The Physical Therapist understands his or her role as a professional, maintains standards of professional conduct, and provides leadership to improve students’ learning and well-being. The Physical Therapist understands self-reflection, the importance of efficient data collection and manipulation; constantly pursuing professional development opportunities and researched based supports in communication abilities.

The Physical Therapist:

• Provides frequent and appropriate information to families about the methods utilized within therapy sessions and conveys information about individual student progress in a culturally sensitive manner.
• Maintains highly effective data management system for monitoring student progress, including service logging; consistently reflecting upon the best practice and refining services to meet needs of individual students.

• Utilizes resources, strategies, networks, organizations, and unique services that work with individuals with disabilities and their families regarding career, vocational, and transition support, including possible funding agencies and financial sources for secondary aged students (local, state, and federal).

• Consistently demonstrates high professional judgment and advocates/models for others within the educational setting and community.

• Understands the scope of his or her practice and seeks additional resources and assistance as needed to meet the individualized needs of students; seeks out professional development strategies to stay current on researched based instructional strategies, services and professional growth.

• Demonstrates quality preparation and participation for meetings/activities; displays strong capabilities in presentation of information both verbally and in writing; and creates professionally written reports reflective of student progress.

• Demonstrates knowledgeable of rights to privacy, confidentiality, and respect for differences among all persons interacting with individuals with disabilities.

• Provides leadership to others in maintaining ethical standards of the physical therapy practice and teaching.

• Observes and follows all PASEC policies and procedures; maintains high levels of professionalism and commitment through punctuality and attendance.

• Performs other duties as assigned by the PASEC administration.