Therapies in the School

26th Annual Conference

November 20 and 21, 2025

09:30 am EST ▪ 08:30 am CST ▪ 07:30 am MST ▪ 06:30 am PST

ERI EDUCATION RESOURCES INC.

life-changing learning for therapists by therapists

LIVE WEBINAR

Dynamic Topics Presented by Leading Experts at the Annual Conference for School-Based Therapists!

This year, we're diving deep into the **most pressing topics** in school-based therapy—designed to empower you with practical tools, evidence-based strategies and renewed inspiration. Join our expert and esteemed speakers for the **Therapies in the School 26th Annual Conference on November 20 and 21, 2025.**

Here's a snapshot of some of the topics you can expect:

- **Complex Communicators**: Build stronger connections and communication strategies for students with complex needs.
- **Sensorimotor Needs and Behavior**: Enhance children's capabilities for meaningful participation in the classroom.
- **ADHD & Vision**: Uncover the often-overlooked link between ADHD and functional vision deficits.
- **New School-Based Therapists:** Discover best practices and foundational knowledge to start strong.
- **DCD in the Classroom**: Understand how Developmental Coordination Disorder impacts learning and participation.
- **"Sensory vs. Behavior":** Zoom in on the sensory, affective, and motor functions that are the foundation for student behavior. Additionally, explore strategies to facilitate the expansion of regulatory capacity.
- **Neuromuscular & Motor Function**: Stay current with the latest findings in neuromuscular and motor function.
- **Play-Based Handwriting**: Embrace playful, effective strategies to support handwriting development.
- **Pediatric Orthotics**: Demystify orthotic recommendations and their role in school-based therapy.

Reserve your spot today - choose the track that best meets your needs. We can't wait to learn with you!

AUDIENCE:

This intermediate level conference is for PTs, PTAs, OTs, OTAs, SLPs and special educators working with the school-aged child.

Join the ERI community that fosters therapists building connections, sharing ideas and actively learning.

We hope to see you at this year's conference!

Thursday, November 20, 2025 – All Times Are EST (US)

09:30-10:00 **Zoom Registration/Course Opens**

10:00-10:15 Welcome and Introduction – *Alyson Loria, VP, Carolyn Cwalinski,* Conference Chairperson

10:15-11:45 **From Movement to Meaning: Creating Connection and Communication with Complex Communicators**

Tanna Neufeld

Supportive communication partners can positively impact motor, sensory, and daily living skills, along with communication growth for students with complex communication needs. Gain practical, discipline-appropriate strategies to scaffold communication naturally, attribute meaning to communicative signals, provide accessible and supportive communication opportunities, and partner with students as competent agents.

- Recognize the foundational context for communication growth in students with complex communication needs (CCN).
- Apply strategies to validate and expand echolalia and non-symbolic communication signals through movement, affect, and natural language mapping.
- Choose strategies to scaffold communication during daily activities for students with CCN across different communication profiles (pre-linguistic, AAC users, and/or gestalt language processors).

11:45-12:00 Break

12:00-1:30 **Looking at Behavior Through the Lens of Embodied Cognition**

Athena Oden

How might we enhance a child's capabilities for functional behaviors at school? Can we impact behavior by better understanding the connection between cognition and bodily experiences? Let's explore and expand upon embodied cognition and how it impacts sensorimotor development, social interaction, language and communication, and self-regulation to provide effective interventions for students throughout the educational continuum.

- Establish the link between embodied cognition, sensorimotor needs, and associated behaviors.
- Determine how behavior and sensorimotor needs influence participation and success.
- Recognize types of interventions that acknowledge potential sensorimotor needs to achieve behavioral and learning goals.

1:30-2:30 Lunch Break

2:30-5:45 Concurrent Workshops 1: Afternoon breaks will be scheduled for each workshop.

A. **How Sensorimotor Needs Affect Behavior and What to Do About It**

Athena Oden

Disabilities, trauma, toxic stress, environmental barriers, and more are impacting students' participation and contributing to behavior differences, including self-stimulation, restricted and repetitive behaviors, anxiety responses and self-injurious actions. By examining sensorimotor needs in multiple case studies, we can learn to align our interventions and recommended activities with evident behaviors to facilitate participation. Case study applications address students diagnosed with ASD, VI, MI, MD, and/or DHH.

- Recognize sensorimotor needs that may manifest as behaviors in children.
- Determine how behavior and/or sensorimotor needs affect self-regulation, self-awareness, and functional skills.
- Apply tailored interventions that focus on a student's sensorimotor needs and will influence behavioral responses.

B. **Seeing Beyond ADHD: Uncovering Vision Challenges in Students**

Amber Fessler

This interactive workshop is designed for school-based therapists and professionals working with students with ADHD. Participants will explore the often-overlooked connection between ADHD and functional vision deficits, gaining valuable insights backed by research-based evidence. The session will provide practical, cost-effective tools that can be immediately implemented in educational settings. Through case study discussions, attendees will enhance their clinical reasoning skills while discovering various therapeutic strategies, including effective classroom accommodations and direct interventions.

- Determine the functional implications of functional vision deficits related to ADHD in the school setting.
- Select assessment and screening tools to evaluate functional vision skills in students with ADHD.
- Apply practical, cost-effective interventions for students with ADHD and functional vision deficits that support classroom and school participation.

C. **Purposeful Push-In: Practical Strategies for Integrated School-Based Therapy**

Jennifer Huff

Bring your services into the classroom and other school spaces to make them more powerful, effective, and student-centered! Enhance your understanding of the educational model and legal mandates to clarify your role, collaborate more effectively, and embed therapy into existing routines. Identify practical strategies to apply principles of integrated services that drive meaningful student outcomes.

- Apply effective collaboration strategies to clarify roles, build partnerships with school staff, and contribute to an interdisciplinary approach to meet student needs.
- Integrate strategies into natural school routines to support collaborative student goals using case scenarios.
- Relate the educational model and legal mandates (IDEA, LRE) to integrated therapy practices.

D. **Increasing Skills, Competence and Confidence: Best Practices for the New School-based Therapist**

Erika (Buckhouse) Hanson

Whether you are new to practice or new to schools, this session will prepare you to perform the essentials with skill and confidence. School-based therapists encounter processes, requirements and challenges unique to the educational setting. A solid foundation of current evidence and best practice that aligns with federal regulations and school system expectations is essential to the school-based therapists' success and role satisfaction. From evaluations that center educational needs to collaborative goals, all the way to a variety of appropriate interventions to support those goals, you'll gain competence and confidence in the many parts of your role as a school-based therapist!

- Choose an assessment tool or method that informs on a students' educational access and participation.
- Select collaborative, educational goals in place of stand-alone, discipline-specific goals.
- Determine best-practice recommendations for interventions, service minutes and location of services based on collaborative goals.

E. **Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) In and Out of the Classroom: Strategies for Success**

Melissa Gerber

How does Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) impact a student's ability to participate fully? Considering both academic and social engagement, examine and address fine motor and gross motor coordination for a variety of activities, such as handwriting, tool use, and playground games. Learn effective accommodations based on students' needs and appropriate evidence-based evaluation tools for students with DCD.

- Identify two ways Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) may impair a child's ability to participate in school activities.
- Select four appropriate accommodations for a client with DCD to maximize their function in school.
- Choose an evidence-based evaluation tool to address a functional concern/deficit for a child with DCD, using the provided case study.

Friday, November 21, 2025 – All Times are EST (US)

09:30-10:00 **Zoom Registration/Course Opens**

10:00-10:15 **Introduction, Scholarship Presentations, Raffles**

10:15-11:45 **Moving Beyond "Sensory vs. Behavior": Why This Question is Popular but Doesn't Lead Us to Answers**

Amy Lewis

Expanding regulatory capacity requires us to move beyond the question "Is it sensory or is it behavior?" We will zoom out to consider the big picture of regulatory capacity and zoom in on the sensory, affective, and motor functions that are the foundation for behavior. We will discuss the layers of support needed to address self-regulation and give examples that go beyond sensory strategies.

- Identify 3 functions that underly regulatory capacity and contribute to behavioral outcomes.
- Determine when it is appropriate to apply strategies that stretch regulation.
- Select strategies that support affect regulation

11:45-12:00 Break

12:00-1:30 **Motor Needs, Educational Relevance, and Evidence-Based Practice: Incorporating All Three for Evaluations and Interventions that Promote Participation**

Nia Mensah

Improve neuromuscular and motor function in an educationally relevant way that is up to date with research findings. Connect current evidence to "real world" schools and classrooms where students present with varying levels of neuromuscular functioning, equipment management needs, and unique engagement and access challenges. Explore participation-based assessments, develop participation goals and adjust intervention expectations to focus on participation outcomes.

- Utilize practical decision-making tools to align school-based therapy interventions with current evidence and student-specific participation needs.
- Apply participation-based frameworks when selecting tests and measures for students with neuromuscular or other motor challenges.
- Integrate evidence-based strategies to increase skill and participation for students with neuromuscular challenges.

1:30-2:30 Lunch Break

2:30-5:45 Concurrent Workshops II: Afternoon breaks will be scheduled for each workshop.

A. **Expanding Regulatory Capacity: A Better Approach Than "Sensory vs. Behavior"**

Amy Lewis

Explore strategies to facilitate the expansion of regulatory capacity. We will discuss how anyone can provide support from a bottom-up or top-down perspective and will explore when it is appropriate to provide various supports. Strategies will include stretching regulatory capacity to build more robust self-regulation skills. The neuroscience that underlies our sensory, affective, and motor functions will be highlighted and related to concrete ideas of how to apply this knowledge to practice.

- Determine appropriate strategies for expanding regulatory capacity depending on student's current function.
- Differentiate between supporting regulation and stretching regulatory capacity.
- Relate affective development to effective supports for self-regulation.

B. **Making Writing Meaningful: Play-Based Therapy for Kids Who "Hate Writing"**

Kelsie Olds

Nobody wants to be the "handwriting teacher" when they become an OT, yet that's the reality in many schools. At IEP meetings, adults decide that children should grind away at something they feel bad at and bad about. Let's break down the barriers between "adults' goals" and "child's goals" when it comes to all kinds of paper-pencil schoolwork. We'll uncover and embrace the purposeful writing through play!

- Adapt an intervention session to enhance the child's therapeutic takeaway and authentic joy during writing participation.
- Relate the value of child-led, play-based occupational therapy practice to handwriting objectives in school-based documentation.
- Correlate themes in children's play to interventions that support playful, authentic engagement in writing.

C. **Demystifying Pediatric Orthotic Recommendations for the School-Based Therapist**

Amanda Hall

Orthotic recommendations can be a confusing and contentious area. School-based therapists have critical information about students' functional needs, but their valuable input is too often overlooked during the orthotic decision-making process. Increase your fluency in orthotic terminology, principles, and evidence to advocate for the most appropriate orthotic prescription, design, and dosage for your students.

- Utilize a logical system of orthotic terminology to effectively communicate across teams.
- Differentiate coronal versus sagittal plane orthotic design, based on the available evidence.
- Apply the ICF Model as a framework to develop individualized plans for each student.

D. **Practical Tools for Participation: Planning, Delivering and Adjusting Interventions for Students with Motor Needs**

Nia Mensah

Building on the morning plenary, this interactive workshop equips therapists with tools to structure treatment planning, manage caseloads, and apply ongoing or informal? participation-based assessments for students with motor needs. Using case applications, interpret assessment findings to develop functional goals for the school setting. Problem solve how to incorporate evidence-based, play-based interventions, while taking into consideration behavioral supports, assistive technology, and family-centered advocacy. Case studies will apply to diverse student and environmental scenarios.

- Develop goals that reflect meaningful participation in the school environment.
- Integrate assistive technology to support team goals and daily access for students with motor needs.
- Modify intervention plans to increase participation for kids with motor needs based on varying functional capabilities and family priorities.

Conference Faculty

At the forefront of school-based practice

Amber Fessler, OTD, MS, OTR/L, is a highly experienced pediatric occupational therapist with two decades of expertise working with diverse pediatric populations. She is a contributing author to Dr. Scheiman's Understanding and Managing Vision Deficits: A Guide for Occupational Therapists (4th Edition) and has published research on occupational therapy and optometry collaboration in pediatric care in the Vision Development and Rehabilitation Journal

Melissa Gerber, OTD, OTR/L, is a seasoned and respected clinician with extensive experience in pediatrics. She began her career in adults in inpatient/outpatient rehabilitation and acute care. Currently, she has been working for the Great Neck Public Schools for the past 24 years. She is president of 4MYKIDSOT, a private practice where she provides therapy and evaluations

Amanda Hall, PT, began teaching clinical education with serial therapeutic casting courses, and has since developed additional coursework based on an integrative approach to treatment for patients with pediatric and neurological health conditions. Her clinical practice is at the Rehabilitation and Specialized Care of Children's National Hospital (formerly the HSC Pediatric Center) in Washington, DC, where she specializes in treating "outliers" and patients with complex presentations.

Erika (Buckhouse) Hanson, PT, has been a full-time school-based physical therapist in Fargo Public Schools for over 20 years and has mentored many new school-based OT's, PT's and special education teachers. Erika is an advanced trainer of the Nurtured Heart Approach ® and a coach for Catalyst Approach to classroom management. Both of these strategies help to connect with students, integrate into the school environment, and address behavioral concerns.

Jennifer Huff, OTR, MOT, Jennifer Huff, OTR, MOT is passionate about empowering practitioners to be effective, collaborative members of their school teams. She provides resources and mentorship to school-based OT practitioners nationwide, is on the Texas Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA) Speakers Bureau and presented at the 2025 TOTA Annual Conference.

Amy Lewis, OTR/L, is a pediatric OT with a particular interest in psychology, sensory integration, auditory interventions, relational neuroscience, and light touch body work. She has certifications in SIPT, Therapeutic Listening, Rhythmic Entrainment Intervention, iLs, and Safe and Sound Protocol. Amy currently works at Powerfully You, teaching and supporting therapists, and lectures as Affiliate Faculty at The Medical University of South Carolina.

Nia Mensah, PT, DPT, PhD, is a pediatric physical therapist, researcher, and educator with over 15 years of experience serving children with complex developmental disabilities. Her clinical and academic work bridges school-based practice, early intervention, and translational motor learning research. She is widely recognized for advancing culturally responsive and evidence-informed care in school settings and has presented nationally on the intersection of equity, family advocacy, and school-based service delivery.

Tanna Neufeld, CCC-SLP brings nearly 20 years of clinical experience supporting children and young adults with developmental differences. As the founding director of AACcessible, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving global access to AAC through education, advocacy, awareness, and action, Tanna oversees a team of volunteers and contributors united by a shared commitment to enhancing social-emotional and communicative outcomes for individuals with complex needs.

Athena Oden, PT, developer of the Ready Bodies, Learning Minds: Cultivating the Complete Child© program has practiced in pediatrics for 40+ years. Her Ready Bodies book provides insight into the sensory and motor systems essential for learning while outlining the curriculum for school-based motor lab programs. She contributed to APTA's white paper on The Role of School-Based Physical Therapy: Successful Participation for All Students in 2012 and 2023.

Kelsie Olds, MOT, OTR, "The Occuplaytional Therapist" on their online platforms, has worked on an Air Force base in England; in rural Oklahoma, USA; and currently in Geelong, Australia. This gives them a unique perspective on various Western systems of healthcare and education, and the ways those intersect and affect the children they work with every day.

Instructor disclosure information available at: Therapies in the School 26th Annual Conference 2025

(Click on individual speakers for full bio and disclosure information

WEBINAR INSTRUCTIONS

Two weeks prior to the Therapies in the School webinar, you will receive detailed log-in instructions and password protected access to a comprehensive handout. Check out Webinar FAQs here!

IMPORTANT! Please be sure to sign-in **15 minutes prior to the start time of each Session (AM and PM)** so we can complete the registration process. If you do not sign on early, there may be a delay in admitting you to the course.

CEU INFORMATION

The course meets the criteria for 12 contact hours (1.2 CEUs) for 2 days or 6 contact hours (0.6 CEUs) for 1 day. Intermediate Level.

Education Resources Inc. is an AOTA Approved Provider of professional development. Course approval ID# 13946. This Distance Learning-Interactive course is offered at 12 contact hours 1.2 CEUs. (Intermediate Level, OT Service Delivery, Foundational Knowledge & Professional Issues). AOTA does not endorse specific course content, products or clinical procedures.

Approved Provider for the **FL** Occupational Therapy Association CE Broker for 14 CE Hours (2 day) or 7 CE hours (1 day). NBCOT Professional Development for 12 PDUs (2 day) or 6 PDUs (1 day). Approved by the **TX** Board of OT Examiners.

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Approved by the **MD** Board of Physical Therapy Examiners for 12 (2 day) or 6 (1 Day) CE Hours.
Application has been made to the **MN** Board of Physical Therapy for 12 CE Hours.
Application has been made to by the **NJ** Board of Physical Therapy Examiners for 12 (2 day) or 6 (1 Day) CEC's.
Approved by the **OH** Physical Therapy Association for 12 (2 day) hours.

Approved sponsor by the State of **IL** Department of Financial and Professional Regulation for Physical Therapy for 14 (2 day) or 7 (one day) contact hours. Approved provider by the **NY** State Board of Physical Therapy for 14.4 contact hours (1.44 CEUs) (2 day) or 7.2 (0.72 CEUs) (2 day). Education Resources is an approved agency by the PT Board of **CA** for 12 (2 day) or 6 (1 day) contact hours. This activity is provided by the **TX** Board of PT Examiners for 12 (2 day) or 6 (1 day) CCUs. Approved Provider for **OK** State Board of Medical Licensure & Supervision #BAP202310003. Approved provider to The **New Mexico** Board of Physical Therapy.

The following state boards of physical therapy accept other states' approval: AK, AR, AZ, DC, DE, GA, HI, ID, IN, KS, KY, MA, MI, MO, MS, NC, OR, PA, RI, SC, UT, VA, VT, WI, WY. The following state boards of physical therapy either do not require course pre-approval or do not require CEUs for re-licensure: AL, CO, CT, IA, ME, MT, NE, ND, NH, SD, WA.
12 hours qualifies towards the discipline-specific hours for the 20-hour requirement for NDTA re-certification. They do NOT qualify towards the 8-hour NDTA Instructor requirement for re-certification.

Participants who require **Massachusetts** PDPs can bring their Certificate of Attendance to their respective districts for approval.

Please contact us with any special needs requests: info@educationresourcesinc.com or 508-359-6533.

SCHOOL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

$479.00/person. Group rate: **$439.00/person** (3 or more must register together)**.** Single-day rate: **$245.00.**

EARLY BIRD RATE: $379.00 until August 30, 2025 using coupon code **Therapies2025** at checkout. *Cannot be combined with any other discount**s.***

Deadline for registration is **November 10, 2025**. Registration will be accepted after deadline on a space available basis. To receive a refund (minus a non-refundable $75 administrative fee), cancellation must be received by November 1, 2024.

We accept Checks and P.O.s (must be received prior to the Conference).

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Workshop Selections

Please write (1) for your first choice and (2) for your second choice of workshops for each day.

Day 1 A _____ **B** _____ **C** _____ **D** _____ **E** _____

Day 2 A _____ **B** _____ **C** _____ **D** _____ **E** _____

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