

Educational Therapy – a Path for Your Child

When a child struggles in school despite the best efforts of parents, teachers, and tutors, it may be time to call in an educational therapist.

An educational therapist holds a bachelor's degree, or higher, in education or a related field and is trained to use academic techniques and strategies to treat students who have learning disorders. An ET provides intervention as part of a program in a school setting, a learning center, or a clinic.

Dr. Asha Jaleel, an educational therapy researcher, cites *"The Clinical Practice of Educational Therapy"* by Ficksman and Adelizzi, to show that three principles guide educational therapy.

Principles of Educational Therapy—3 Ps

Professionalism: ETs must know

their boundaries and maintain professionalism. ETs should not only collaborate with parents and educators but also with professionals such as a psychologist or psychiatrist, speech therapist, etc. At all times, ETs must show respect and work as part of an interdisciplinary team.

Perception: Perception differs in various stages of the client's treatment course. Each client has a different perception, and the therapist should be able to reevaluate and change accordingly. Collecting information from parents, clinicians, and teachers helps prevent misperception. Then ETs can develop a more effective plan of action.

Plasticity: The human brain is made up of almost 100 billion neurons, has the capacity to recreate new connections, and is able to reorganize pathways and

sometimes create new neurons. Learning can occur at any age, and plasticity happens throughout life.

More Than Tutoring

Educational therapy differs from traditional tutoring in several ways:

- Tutors typically use educational methods similar to those used in classrooms. Educational therapists use methods that are individualized to the specific learner.
- Tutors typically focus on current classwork, homework, and tests, while educational therapists address the causes of academic struggles.
- Tutors typically review material that has been taught in the classroom, whereas educational therapists focus on teaching efficient ways of thinking and remembering that enable learning for all academic subjects.
- One educational therapist suggested an analogy to a struggling swimmer: Tutoring helps a person stay afloat. Educational therapy teaches a person to swim.

Educational Therapists use multiple techniques to individualize intervention:

- Focusing on students' areas of difficulty and dealing with problems as they arise during the learning process.
- Through assessments, recognize presenting problems as the manifestation of underlying learning issues.
- Perform assessments leading to differential diagnosis.

From the results of the assessments, the ET will develop an individualized intervention program to address deficiencies.

Educational therapists collaborate with parents, teachers, and clinicians to obtain greater insight into the child's issues.

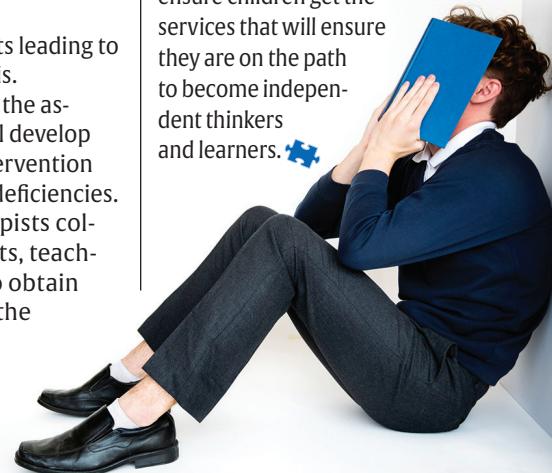
Do the following statements describe your child?

- Says he/she is not smart
 - Has low self-confidence about schoolwork
 - Is discouraged about his/her academic progress
 - Hates school and/or resists going to school
 - Is unusually tired after school
 - Requires much longer than peers to complete homework and schoolwork
 - Continues to struggle despite special help and tutoring
- If this sounds familiar, your child might benefit from educational therapy.

Educational therapists work with issues like the following:

- Dyslexia and other reading disorders
- Dysgraphia and other writing disorders, Dyscalculia and other math disorders.
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD)
- Working memory problems
- Auditory and visual processing problems
- Executive functioning problems, such as organization and time management.

Educational therapists use personal relationships to encourage student motivation and set up a relaxing, safe and rewarding learning atmosphere. They collaborate with allied professionals such as psychologists, psychiatrists, school counselors, ESE teachers, speech pathologists and parents to ensure children get the services that will ensure they are on the path to become independent thinkers and learners.



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