

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDING FIELDWORK

## RATIONALE

Traditionally fieldwork has been an experience where a student spends six weeks to three months at one facility with a single supervisor, often at a hospital or primary health care setting. Many factors are influencing the way occupational therapy practice and clinical education are provided. These factors include an increasing demand for OT services in expanding practice arenas, manpower shortages, increasing numbers of students needing fieldwork placements, students with special needs, and a shrinking number of fieldwork placements. Occupational therapy's growth into broader practice arenas provides us with an opportunity to expand and improve the fieldwork education component to reflect current practice. This is an essential consideration in preparing students for entry-level practice.

## EXAMPLES

Alternate fieldwork options which reflect current practice might include:

- Part-time scheduling (e.g., half days for six months)
- Flexible fieldwork schedule (e.g., longer than three months at one setting)
- Part-time OT supervisor (e.g., placement with consulting OT)
- Rotating through several programs at one setting
- Multiple sites, either with similar or different caseloads/focus, and with one or more supervisors
- Combined experiences (e.g., psychiatric and physical dysfunction, adult and pediatrics)
- One supervisor supervising more than one student simultaneously
- Newer practice or setting areas such as:

Chronic Pain Program, Private Practice, Alzheimer Program, Forensic Mental Health Unit, Head Trauma, Adaptive Living Skills Program, Head Start Center, Prevocational or Vocational, Senior Citizen Center, Cognitive Retraining, Special Education Center, Health Education Center, Work Hardening/Industrial, Administration/Supervision, Injury Center, Hospice Programs, Rural Home Health, Adaptive Sports, Geropsychiatry, Family Crisis Centers, Wellness Program, AIDS Clinics and Programs, Department of Corrections, Camps, Substance Abuse Center, Homeless Shelters, Soup Kitchens, School Affirmative Action Programs, Community Based Programs, Retirement Homes

## CRITERIA

Fieldwork is a collaborative effort between students, clinicians and educators. Ideas for placement may originate with an academic program or with a practitioner. The following

criteria may help indicate whether your practice would be appropriate as a fieldwork placement.

- Your practice provides opportunities for a student to:
  - learn OT skills & concepts, either general or specialized
  - apply OT skills & concepts, learned in the academic setting
  - experience success as a result of their OT intervention
  - communicate with other individuals in a professional manner
- You are interested in supervising students
- You are willing to collaborate with an academic fieldwork coordinator to plan and implement a student placement

## **RESOURCES**

Any of the following resources will be able to offer further assistance:

Education Department, AOTA  
4720 Montgomery Lane, PO Box 31220  
Bethesda, MD 20824-1220  
301-652-2682 ext. 2932

Academic Fieldwork Coordinators  
(at all OT or OTA educational programs)

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