

# A Needs Assessment for Project Development of Occupational Therapy Classroom-based Intervention in Regular Education

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## Abstract

**Background:** Israeli classrooms are heterogeneous and include children with difficulties learning and participating. Occupational therapy in the educational system enhances function and participation of children in their natural environment. Global research emphasizes the importance of occupational therapy support in regular education for the entire class. In Israel however documentation on this subject is sparse. Indeed, there is a need to enhance occupational therapy intervention in regular classes. A needs assessment was developed in order to examine attitudes of educators and occupational therapists towards occupational therapy intervention in regular education for the entire class. **Method:** The needs assessment process included consultations with colleagues and senior members within the educational department, and surveys for first/second grade teachers (n=19) and occupational therapists working in elementary schools (n=27). **Results:** All participants recognized the importance of occupational therapy services in regular education and many occupational therapists (85%) showed interest in intervention as well as receiving structured methods. Teachers reported having students with organization, fine-motor or writing difficulties in their class (90%). **Conclusions:** Findings led to the development of a classroom intervention tool intended for occupational therapists, accompanied by a guiding lecture. The intervention tool focused on first/second grade in order to establish basic skills required for independent functioning and prevention of future struggles. Project

effectiveness will be measured among educators and occupational therapists using satisfaction and outcome indices. **Clinical Implications:** Occupational therapists will receive a tool for reinforcing skills that enable learning, function and participation of all students in their natural educational environment. Furthermore, it may reduce the number of students with difficulties and enhance the sense of well-being among students and teachers.

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