

## **Professional Growth Rubric Occupational Therapist**

The occupational therapist professional growth rubrics are organized around seven areas of a therapist's job performance. These seven areas are:

- I. Planning and Preparing for Treatment**
- II. Delivery of Therapy**
- III. Building Relationships with Students**
- IV. Management of Services**
- V. Consultation, Evaluation, and Follow-up**
- VI. Family and Community Outreach**
- VII. Professional Responsibilities**

The rubrics are designed to give the occupational therapist(OT) an assessment of where they stand in all performance areas with detailed guidance on what is expected to improve.

There are four levels of OT professional growth rubrics. The *Proficient* level describes solid professional performance. This level is the expected level of performance for OT(s). The *Distinguished* level is reserved for truly outstanding therapy as described by the very demanding criteria of the area. This level may have relatively few scores. The *Professional Support Needed* level indicates that performance has deficiencies and OT(s) and principals/directors should not be content with scores at this level. Performance at the *Does Not Meet Standard* level is unacceptable and needs to be remediated immediately.

The professional growth summary conference between the principal/director and the therapist(s) can be greatly enhanced when each fills out the rubrics in advance (using the highlighter approach below). Once each has filled out the rubrics, they should meet and compare scores one page at a time. The principal/director has the final say, but the discussion should aim for consensus based on evidence of the fairest score for each criterion. Principals/directors cannot know everything about all rubric areas and must approach this with some humility while therapist(s) must be open to feedback from someone with an outside perspective.

Using the highlighter approach, it is important to consider each of the nine criteria individually. Then, the therapist(s) and principal/director move up and down the four levels (reading the descriptions for items at Distinguished, Proficient, Professional Support Needed, and Does Not Meet Standards level). Each finds the specific descriptor level that best describes the performances, and highlights the line. This creates a graphic display of overall performance, areas for commendation, and areas that need work. The back page of the rubric will be completed together and put into the employee's file.

It is important that the principals help therapists to continue to grow in their positions by giving candid, evidence-based feedback, and follow-up support. It is also important that the therapists score themselves candidly and honestly. Working together can bring about professional growth and ultimately impact student achievement.

# I. Planning and Preparing for Treatment

The OT:

## 4 – Distinguished

- a. Demonstrates broad knowledge of treatment strategies.
- b. Displays extensive knowledge of appropriate characteristics of child development.
- c. Plans activities for the year that are directly aligned with IEP objectives.
- d. Designs activities with clear measurable objectives aligned with needs and IEP goals.
- e. Designs highly relevant activities that will motivate all students and engage them in active participation.
- f. Utilizes diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to closely monitor and direct instructional planning.
- g. Designs therapy involving an effective mixture of sensory, visual, and fine motor skills.
- h. Designs activities that grade complex motor tasks and address all learning needs.
- i. Utilizes sensory and treatment room(s) and all materials effectively.

## 3 – Proficient

- a. Knows the treatment strategies well.
- b. Demonstrates an understanding of appropriate child development characteristics.
- c. Plans for the year to meet students' IEP objectives.
- d. Designs activities based on measurable objectives aligned with goals.
- e. Designs activities that are relevant, motivating, and likely to engage students in active learning.
- f. Uses formative and summative assessments to measure student learning and guide instruction.
- g. Designs therapy sessions that use an appropriate mix of materials and various motor strategies.
- h. Designs activities that break down complex motor tasks and target diverse learning needs.
- i. Organizes treatment area and materials well.

## 2 – Professional Support Needed

- a. Is somewhat familiar with the treatment techniques.
- b. Has a narrow understanding of how students develop and learn.
- c. Has a vague curriculum which does not always address IEP goals.
- d. Designs activities with an objective, but objective is not aligned with needs or goals.
- e. Designs activities that address one student, but are not adaptable to all.
- f. Infrequently monitors or evaluates progress.
- g. Plans activities that involve a mixture of good and mediocre therapeutic materials.
- h. Plans activities with some thought as to how to accommodate students' needs.
- i. The room is organized for therapy with little regard for materials.

## 1 – Does Not Meet Standard

- a. Has little to no knowledge of treatment strategies or how to carry them out.
- b. Has little familiarity with how students develop and learn.
- c. Plans day by day with little consideration to overall goals.
- d. Daily activities have no evident objective stated verbally or in writing.
- e. Plans activities with very little likelihood of motivating or involving students.
- f. Spends no time in creating tests that measure student learning; does not use assessment data in activity planning.
- g. Plans therapy that relies on mediocre and low-quality materials.
- h. Plans all lessons aimed at OT caseload, ignoring individual needs.
- i. Room arrangement is awkward and materials are hard to access.

Overall rating: \_\_\_ Comments:

## II. Delivery of Therapy

The OT:

### 4 - Distinguished

- a. Indicates to students exactly what is expected by providing a model and/or verbal and physical cues.
- b. Captures students' interest by making correlating treatment materials.
- c. Uses verbal and demonstrative cues at age appropriate and/or ability level.
- d. Orchestrates highly effective treatment and materials to engage and motivate students.
- e. Engages all students in focused work in which they are active learners and problem-solvers.
- f. Uses questioning techniques that encourage students' answer, verbally or nonverbally.
- g. Consistently and continuously gives reinforcement and encouragement while delivering treatment.
- h. Meets the learning needs and styles of all students by differentiating and modifying whenever necessary.
- i. Has students practice what they learn and apply it in multiple situations or learning opportunities.

### 3 – Proficient

- a. Gives students a clear sense of purpose by providing a model or providing cues.
- b. Hooks interest in each treatment session.
- c. Uses appropriate language and good examples to present materials.
- d. Orchestrates effective treatment and materials to foster student growth.
- e. Encourages all students to actively think about and use the skills being taught.
- f. Uses some questioning that encourages students to answer, as able.
- g. Gives reinforcement and encouragement while delivering treatment.
- h. Differentiates instruction to accommodate students' learning needs.
- i. Has students practice what they have learned.

### 2 – Professional Support Needed

- a. Shows or tells students the main goal of the session.
- b. Tries to make the activity interesting and builds on skills students already know.
- c. Uses language cues that are sometimes fuzzy, confusing or inappropriate.
- d. Uses a limited range of strategies and materials.
- e. Attempts to get students actively involved, but many students are disengaged.
- f. Limits questions or interaction.
- g. Rarely gives reinforcement and encouragement while delivering treatment.
- h. Attempts to accommodate students, with limited success.
- i. Uses therapy related to real life needs.

### 1 – Does Not Meet Standards

- a. Begins lessons without giving students a model or verbal/physical cues.
- b. Does not engage most students' interests.
- c. Presents material in a confusing way, using language that is not ability oriented.
- d. Uses only one or two treatment strategies without varied materials and doesn't engage most students.
- e. Mostly talks "at" students and has them plod through uninteresting activities.
- f. Fails to question students.
- g. Fails to give reinforcement and encouragement while delivering treatment.
- h. Fails to provide for differentiated instruction for students with special needs.
- i. Moves on at the end of treatment without applying to life skills.

Overall rating: \_\_\_ Comments:

### III. Building Relationships with Students

The OT:

#### 4 – Distinguished

- a. Demonstrates genuine caring and respect for individual students.
- b. Is readily available to address students' self care, emotional, sensory, and motor needs.
- c. Shows great sensitivity and respect for students' cultures, values, and beliefs.
- d. Creates a treatment environment that nurtures positive relationships.
- e. Consistently smiles and uses a friendly tone of voice.
- f. Consistently seeks student input.
- g. Consistently builds a comfort level that allows students to take risks.
- h. Regularly allows students choices in instructional activities.
- i. Consistently uses effective praise to reinforce success.

#### 3 – Proficient

- a. Is friendly and demonstrates general warmth, caring, and respect.
- b. Is available to address students' self care, emotional, sensory, and motor needs.
- c. Shows respect for students' cultures, values, and beliefs.
- d. Creates a treatment environment that develops positive relationships.
- e. Smiles and uses a friendly tone of voice.
- f. Seeks student input.
- g. Builds a comfort level that allows students to take risks.
- h. Allows students choices in treatment activities.
- i. Usually uses effective praise to reinforce success.

#### 2 – Professional Support Needed

- a. Is generally warm and caring, but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, or disregard for students.
- b. Is seldom available to address students' self care, emotional, sensory and motor needs.
- c. Tries to be sensitive to students' cultures, values, and beliefs, but sometimes fails.
- d. Appears unconcerned about creating a treatment environment that nurtures positive relationships.
- e. Occasionally smiles and may use monotone voice.
- f. Rarely seeks student input.
- g. Seldom builds a comfort level that allows students to take risks.
- h. Seldom allows students choices in treatment activities.
- i. Seldom uses effective praises to reinforce success.

#### 1 – Does Not Meet Standard

- a. Interacts negatively, sarcastically, or inappropriately with students.
- b. Is not available to address students' self care, emotional, sensory, and motor needs.
- c. Is often insensitive to students' cultures, values, and beliefs.
- d. Creates a treatment environment that is negative or threatening.
- e. Does not smile; uses a sarcastic tone of voice.
- f. Does not seek student input.
- g. Does not build a comfort level that allows students to take risks.
- h. Does not allow students choices in instructional activities.
- i. Does not use effective praise to reinforce success.

Overall rating:\_\_\_ Comments:

## IV. Classroom Management

The OT:

### 4 – Distinguished

- a. Sets significant and challenging expectations for students; communicates confidence in students' abilities to meet the expectations.
- b. Integrates and reinforces social skills throughout the day that successfully develop positive interactions among students.
- c. Motivates students' performance by utilizing effective praise and specific feedback.
- d. Has a highly effective discipline repertoire and is very responsive to student needs.
- e. Is keenly aware of student behavior; consistently responds to student misbehaviors with effective interactions.
- f. Uses instructional time effectively to maximize student engagement and achievement.
- g. Establishes efficient pacing and seamless transitions resulting in minimal loss of instructional time.
- h. Creates and implements effective procedures and routines that maximize instructional time.
- i. Creates an engaging, safe, and efficiently organized environment to maximize learning opportunities.

### 3 – Proficient

- a. Clearly communicates, models, and enforces high expectations for students.
- b. Teaches appropriate social skills and fosters positive interactions among students.
- c. Motivates and encourages students utilizing effective praise and positive feedback.
- d. Has an effective discipline repertoire and is responsive to student needs.
- e. Monitors student behavior and responds to misbehaviors with appropriate interactions.
- f. Makes adequate use of time available; students are consistently engaged.
- g. Demonstrates successful use of instructional pacing and transitions with little loss of instruction time.
- h. Develops and implements effective service procedures and routines.
- i. Creates a safe and organized learning environment designed to stimulate students.

### 2 – Professional Support Needed

- a. Expectations are somewhat clear to students; teacher attempts to respond to student behavior with inconsistent results.
- b. Often lectures students about the need for good behavior but may reflect occasional inconsistencies or favoritism.
- c. Relies on extrinsic rewards and general praise in an attempt to get students to cooperate or comply.
- d. Has a limited disciplinary repertoire; may overlook student behaviors.
- e. Makes an effort to respond to student misbehaviors, but interactions with students are hit or miss.
- f. Students are frequently off task or not engaged in the instructional process.
- g. Poor pacing and transitions may result in loss of instructional time.
- h. Some routines and procedure are in place, but instructional time is often lost.
- i. Has adequate organization and provides a somewhat safe learning environment; treatment environment is bland.

### 1 – Does Not Meet Standard

- a. Appears to have no standards of conduct in the classroom.
- b. Interactions with students are negative, sarcastic, or humiliating.
- c. Makes little or no attempt is made to motivate students; students demonstrate a lack of compliance.
- d. Does not appear to have a discipline repertoire; therapist is unresponsive to student behaviors.
- e. Does not respond to student misbehaviors or responds to misbehaviors inconsistently or inappropriately.
- f. Does not use instructional time effectively resulting in off-task behavior or poor student achievement.
- g. Loses much time during instruction due to poor pacing and ineffective transitions.
- h. Has few therapy routines and procedures visible and apparent; much instructional time is lost.
- i. Has an unorganized sessions and seems uninviting, unsafe or both.

Overall rating:\_\_\_ Comments:

## V. Consultation, Evaluation and Follow-Up

The OT:

### 4 – Distinguished

- a. Provides clear criteria for proficient work.
- b. Uses a variety of research based assessments to immediately and continuously pretest, diagnose, and monitor growth.
- c. Continuously checks for understanding, redirects to decrease confusion, and give specific, helpful feedback.
- d. Continuously follows up with struggling students; gives time and support to improve independence.
- e. Constantly reflects on effective therapy and works every day to improve.
- f. Analyzes assessment data to draw conclusions; consults with colleagues on useful strategies.
- g. Regularly and promptly records progress for parents and colleagues to see.
- h. Assigns highly engaging home programs and provides rich consult materials.
- i. Has students set goals, self-monitor and take responsibility for their progress.

### 3 – Proficient

- a. Provides criteria for students' proficiency.
- b. Uses a variety of assessments to diagnose and monitor students' strengths and needs.
- c. Frequently checks for understanding and modifies as needed.
- d. Takes responsibility for students who are not succeeding.
- e. Reflects on the effectiveness of treatment and works to improve.
- f. Draws conclusions on treatment strategies and periodically consults with colleagues.
- g. Records progress in a timely manner for parents to see.
- h. Assigns student/parent home programs for further home practice opportunities.
- i. Has students set goals for self and monitors their progress.

### 2 – Professional Support Needed

- a. Tells students some of the qualities that their finished work should exhibit, but lacks examples of student work.
- b. Uses inadequate tests that lack means to examine strengths and needs.
- c. Asks questions to see if students understand, but lacks frequent quality feedback.
- d. Offers student's additional time to respond, but rarely re-teaches or offers extra help.
- e. Thinks about what might have been done better at the end of a therapy session, but doesn't make changes.
- f. Infrequently analyzes test data or consults with colleagues.
- g. Infrequently records progress for students and parents to see.
- h. Urges parents to work with their children to complete home activities for carryover, but does not hold students' accountable.
- i. Urges students to set goals, but does not follow up to help students manage them.

### 1 – Does Not Meet Standard

- a. Expects student to know or figure out testing without examples.
- b. Uses only tests with one type of assessment strategy, not identifying strengths and needs.
- c. Rarely checks with students to see if they understand.
- d. Does not follow-up with students who fail.
- e. Unable to modify approach if a therapy session does not go well.
- f. Fails to analyze test data or consult with colleagues.
- g. Does not record progress updates for parents to see at quarter.
- h. Assigns home programs, but is resigned to the fact that many students/parents will not comply.
- i. Does not help students/parents set goals.

Overall rating: \_\_\_ Comments:

# VI. Family and Community Outreach

The OT:

## 4 – Distinguished

- a. Shows great sensitivity and respect for family and community cultures, values, and beliefs.
- b. Shares with each parent information about their child and a strong belief he/she will reach goals.
- c. Provides clear, user-friendly, at home ideas for parents.
- d. Makes sure parents hear positive news about their child first, and immediately flags any problems.
- e. Frequently involves parents in supporting students IEP needs.
- f. Deals immediately and successfully with parents' concerns; makes parents feel welcome any time.
- g. Gives parents detailed feedback on child's progress through the use of varied communications.
- h. Is successful in contacting and working with all parents, including those who are hard to reach.
- i. Successfully reaches out to community to meet needs of OT students.

## 3 – Proficient

- a. Communicates respectfully with parents and is sensitive to different families' culture and values.
- b. Shows parents' a genuine interest and belief in each child's ability to reach goals.
- c. Gives parents clear, succinct expectations for student learning and behavior for the year.
- d. Promptly informs parents of behavior and learning problems, and also updates parents on good news.
- e. Updates parents on community resources to support learning at home.
- f. Responds promptly and effectively to parents' concerns; makes parents feel welcome in the school.
- g. Uses quarterly reports, emails, and phone calls to give parents feedback on their children's progress.
- h. Tries to communicate with all parents and is tenacious in contacting hard-to-reach parents.
- i. Occasionally reaches out to families and community agencies to bring in volunteers and additional resources.

## 2 – Professional Support Needed

- a. Tries to be sensitive to the cultures and beliefs of students' families, but sometimes is indifferent.
- b. Tells parents that he or she cares about their child, but does not share occupational therapy expectations.
- c. Sends home therapy notes, but with little follow through.
- d. Lets parents know about problems their child is having, but rarely mentions positive news.
- e. Sends home occasional suggestions on how parents can help their child with need areas.
- f. Is slow to respond to some parent concerns; may give off an unwelcoming perception.
- g. Uses quarterly reports only to tell parents the areas in which their child can improve.
- h. Tries to communicate with all parents, but generally only engages with parents at IEP meetings.
- i. Asks community to contribute extra resources, but does not follow-up.

## 1 – Does Not Meet Standard

- a. Is often insensitive to the cultures and beliefs of students' families.
- b. Does not communicate with parents knowledge of their child or share concerns about their future.
- c. Does not share learning and behavior expectations with parents.
- d. Seldom informs parents of concern or positive news about their child.
- e. Rarely if ever communicates with parents on ways to help their child at home.
- f. Does not respond to parent concerns; makes parents feel unwelcome in the classroom.
- g. Expects parents to follow up on areas that need improvement by reading report card quarterlies, only.
- h. Makes little or no effort to communicate with parents.
- i. Does not reach out for extra support from parents or the community.

Overall rating: \_\_\_ Comments:

# VII. Professional Responsibilities

The OT:

## 4 – Distinguished

- a. Maintains meticulous records (student information, treatment plans) conscientiously and punctually, and is never late.
- b. Presents oneself as a consummate professional; always observes appropriate boundaries.
- c. Is ethical and honest, using impeccable judgment; respects confidentiality.
- d. Is an important member of Special Education team; always attends meetings or special education activities.
- e. Frequently contributes valuable ideas and expertise to promote the school's mission and District goals.
- f. Informs the administration of any concerns; reaches out for help and suggestions when needed.
- g. Actively seeks out feedback and suggestions and uses them to improve performance.
- h. Meets frequently with colleagues to plan, share ideas, and analyze assessments and provides ample OTA supervision.
- i. Devours effective practices from fellow professionals, workshops, readings, study groups, the Web, etc.

## 3 – Proficient

- a. Keeps accurate records of student information and lesson plans; is punctual and reliable with paperwork.
- b. Demonstrates professional demeanor and dress and maintains appropriate boundaries.
- c. Is ethical and honest, uses good judgment; maintains confidentiality with student records.
- d. Shares responsibility of Special Education team; volunteers to serve on committees.
- e. Is a positive team player and contributes ideas, expertise, and time to the mission of school and District goals.
- f. Keeps the administration informed about concerns; asks for help when it is needed.
- g. Listens thoughtfully to other viewpoints; responds constructively to suggestions and criticism.
- h. Collaborates with colleagues to plan treatment, share teaching ideas, and provides OTA supervision.
- i. Seeks out effective therapy ideas from supervisors, colleagues, workshops, reading, the Internet, etc.

## 2 - Professional Support Needed

- a. Occasionally skips assignments, is late, makes errors in records, and/or misses paperwork deadlines.
- b. Occasionally acts and/or dresses in an unprofessional manner and/or violates boundaries.
- c. Sometimes uses poor judgment, is less than completely honest, and/or discloses student information.
- d. Will serve on a committee or attend a school activity when asked to do so.
- e. Occasionally suggests an idea aimed at improving the school.
- f. Is reluctant to share concerns with the administration or ask for help.
- g. Is somewhat defensive but does listen to feedback and suggestions.
- h. Meets occasionally with colleagues and provides some supervision to OTA.
- i. Keeps an eye out for new ideas for improving treatment and learning.

## 1 – Does Not Meet Standard

- a. Frequently skips assignments, is late, makes errors in records or misses paperwork deadlines.
- b. Frequently acts and/or dresses in an unprofessional manner and violates boundaries.
- c. Acts in an ethically questionable manner, uses poor judgment, and/or discloses student information.
- d. Declines invitations to serve on committees or attend school activities.
- e. Rarely if ever contributes ideas that might help improve the school.
- f. Fails to voice concerns or constantly complains, and is not open to help.
- g. Is defensive about criticism and resistant to changing professional practice.
- h. Meets infrequently with colleagues, does not provide OTA supervision, and conversations lack education substance.
- i. Is not open to ideas for improving treatment and learning.

Overall rating: \_\_\_ Comments:

Professional Growth Summary Page  
Occupational Therapist

Therapist's name \_\_\_\_\_ School year \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Subject area/Grade level \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Average Ratings on Individual Rubrics:

**I. Planning and Preparing for Treatment**

Distinguished Proficient Prof. Support Needed Does Not Meet Standards

**II. Delivery of Therapy**

Distinguished Proficient Prof. Support Needed Does Not Meet Standards

**III. Building Relationships with Students**

Distinguished Proficient Prof. Support Needed Does Not Meet Standards

**IV. Management of Services**

Distinguished Proficient Prof. Support Needed Does Not Meet Standards

**V. Consultations, Evaluation, and Follow-Up**

Distinguished Proficient Prof. Support Needed Does Not Meet Standards

**VI. Family and Community Outreach**

Distinguished Proficient Prof. Support Needed Does Not Meet Standards

**VII. Professional Responsibilities**

Distinguished Proficient Prof. Support Needed Does Not Meet Standards

Overall Rating:

Distinguished Proficient Prof. Support Needed Does Not Meet Standards

Overall Comments by Principal/Director:

Overall Comments by Therapist:

Principal's/Director's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Therapist's signature indicates he/she has seen and discussed the professional growth rubric. It does not necessarily denote agreement with the report.)