Policy and Procedures

Lil' Peeps OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FOR KIDS

Lil' Peeps OT for Kids is a paediatric occupational therapy service, operating in the metropolitan area of Perth, Western Australia. Lil' Peeps offers a mobile occupational therapy service where most services are delivered within a school setting, uniquely focussing on significant collaboration with the child, their family and their school. Focus is on participation of the child within the school setting. A key value of Lil' Peeps is upholding and respecting the differences and abilities of all children.

This document provides information for schools and families regarding the policies that Lil' Peeps occupational therapists and assistants adhere to when providing a service.

Who are our clients

Most of the clients receiving services from Lil' Peeps are school aged, 4 years and up. Services may be funded by the family, the school, private health insurers, NDIS or Medicare. We are also able to support children "pre-school" or high school aged, but if we feel a child's needs would be better met with a different service provider, we refer that family to the most appropriate provider.

Registration and work requirements

All therapists providing services will be required to have:

- Appropriate insurances (professional indemnity insurance, public liability insurance and workers compensation)
- Valid driver's licence
- Working with children check
- NDIS worker screening check
- Registration with AHPRA
- Medicare provider number

Assistants will be required to have

- WA working with children check
- Valid driver's licence
- Enrolment in an allied health degree, or certification in allied health assistance or equivalent
- NDIS worker screening check
- Please note that the assistant is covered under the professional indemnity and public liability insurance of the supervising therapist and is covered for workers compensation.

Practice Standards

It is expected that therapists provide a high-quality service and work in line with the OT Board Code of Conduct and Australian Occupational Therapy Association Code of Ethics. The assistant will work under supervision of the occupational therapist, and this can include face to face meetings, work shadowing, written supervision, phone call or video conferencing.

Referral and consent

Referral is obtained through an online form which is completed by a legal guardian or representative. Where a referral has been completed by someone other than a legal guardian, Lil' Peeps OT will contact a legal guardian to gain consent. As a school-based provider, families are notified on initial referral that information regarding their child is shared with both the family and the school. Consent to share information with additional agencies (GP and other therapists) is also obtained and any requirements relating to consent or sharing of information with these agencies will be added as an alert on Halaxy, so practitioners are aware of their obligations. If a third-party requests information about the services your child receives (ie health insurance fund / legal party) we will verify the request is legitimate and gain parent / guardian consent in writing before releasing information. Many schools will also require additional consent forms for the service to be provided on site at school. Consent relating to use of video or photos is obtained at initial referrals.

In cases where family court orders are in place, the initial referrer is asked to declare if court orders are in place. Once this referral is processed by the administration team, where court orders are declared, the administration team places an alert on Halaxy that court orders are in place and contacts the referrer to clarify which aspects of the court order would apply to the provision of the service. Where court orders are shared with Lil' Peeps, these documents will be stored securely on Google drive

On receipt of referrals the administration team provides families with additional information on the services provided and the costing of the services within 5 business days. Clients may be placed on a waitlist and when a place becomes available the administration team contact the family and share details of the therapist with them and confirm that information is also shared with the school. Allocated therapists then contact the families via email to ensure service information is understood, when intervention or assessment process will commence, dates of service, location and frequency, therapy fees and billing.

School procedures

As most therapy (or assistant services) and assessment services will be provided within the school environment it is essential that the therapists and assistants are familiar with school protocol and procedures. Therapists and assistants should

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant school policy of the school they are visiting. This may include completing forms prior to providing a service to the student.
- Sign in and out at each school.
- Provide a copy of WWCC and NDIS worker screening check to school administration as required.
- Communicate at the end of the of the session with the teacher where possible
- Email communication to family and teacher within 24 hours of the session.
- Leave the work area clean and tidy within the school.
- Escort students to and from their classroom.
- Negotiate the space to work in with school staff and be aware of the schools Duty of Care policy.
- Be aware of key emergency procedures of the school.
- Always seek permission if any resources of the school are required (i.e. photocopy worksheets, borrow whiteboards etc).
- Identify and liaise with the key contact of the school (i.e. deputy or learning support co-ordinator) and ask for if and when they wish to be informed of the therapy involvement.

Communication

Expectations for therapists and assistants communicating with families and teachers include:

- Following intervention sessions, a summary email is provided within 24 hours of the session, to the family, teacher and nominated school delegate.
- Following an assessment, a written report will be provided to family and school within 10 business days of the assessment
- Following a session, a brief verbal summary may be provided to the teacher
- Following a block of 6 group sessions, or number of individual sessions agreed upon with the family, a summary report to be emailed to families and teachers within 1 week of the service completing. This may be shared within the weekly intervention notations.
- Therapists will reply within 2 working days to family member or teacher emails
- All communication regarding sessions facilitated by a therapy assistant, will be sent to the families and teachers and CC'd to the supervising OT using the Halaxy platform. Communication from teachers and families, regarding relevant client clinical information will be addressed by the supervising OT.

Service Model

Models of service delivery used are dependent on the client wishing to engage the service. Some of the existing service models are:

- School based screening – compulsory or buy in option of clinical screening assessment.
- Family based – referral by the family GP or other professional for assessment, support and intervention.
- Government funded – referral from a GP for intervention under a Chronic Disease Management Plan, or through NDIS plan managed or self-managed funds for children with a diagnosis or accessing early intervention funding.
- Consultation – broad services provided to meet an agency's needs, including student supervision, teacher support, professional learning and evaluation and research.
- Direct service provision by an occupational therapist or therapy assistant.

Goals

Goals form a significant aspect of the services offered by Lil' Peeps, to ensure the therapy achieves the desired outcomes, and to ensure services are efficient and have an end point. Time frames for these goals may vary but the intention is to ensure that families do not feel the burden of consistent ongoing therapy. The overarching aim is to ensure outcomes are measurable so it can be determined if goals have been achieved, allowing the therapist to look for discharge opportunities. Occupational therapists establish these goals in collaboration with the family.

NDIS clients

Lil' Peeps provides services at times to families that may be able to access NDIS funding. To meet NDIS service requirements, additional annual reporting may be required to support the review of NDIS plans. Therapists will negotiate the schedule of these reports and collaborate with families to ensure the therapy goals align with the child's documented NDIS plan goals. Assessments and reporting for NDIS purposes are charged at the NDIS rate.

Assessment

This may represent a one-off interaction with a client or may be part of the therapeutic process. A range of assessment options are available for therapists to access, including occupational therapy screening, Sensory Profiles, Developmental Test of Visual Perception, Handwriting assessments, Motor assessments (Movement ABC) and school based functional observational participation reviews. The assessments are administered by an occupational therapist. At times assistants may collect assessment data on behalf of a supervising therapist, however all assessment data is analysed and reported on by the therapist.

Intervention

This can take the form of family consultation, where families and teachers are provided with information that can help support their child's development. Direct therapy sessions are also offered onsite at school. These are individually based or in a group format and may be delivered by an occupational therapist or therapy assistant. Most group therapy sessions are offered after a screening process. This is generally offered in 6-week blocks and outcomes are measured at the end of each block of therapy, to determine if ongoing support is still required.

Confidentiality

Client information (including notes, assessment forms, photos and work samples) is maintained in a confidential manner and stored securely (physically and electronically in a cloud based medical records management system Halaxy and Workspace Admin console). Consent to share information is obtained on initial referral. As a school-based provider, it is a referral requirement that information is shared with the school. Personal information including phone numbers will not be shared with 3rd party providers. Service records are stored in an electronic format. Relevant assessment documentation is scanned and stored in an electronic client file along with copies of emails and reports. This information is to be retained for a minimum of 15 years after the last contact and disposal of information will be completed securely and confidentially.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

To assist with accurate record-keeping, we may use secure Artificial Intelligence (AI) for clinical notetaking of consultations (Heidi). This technology operates in an encrypted environment, strictly complies with Australian health privacy laws (APPs), and does not retain audio or use personal data to train AI models.

Appointment of therapist

All referrals are received and processed by the administration officer prior to allocation to a therapist, for delivery of the service. Allocation may occur based on the school the child attends or on the capacity of the therapist to take on the client.

Due to the increasing need for therapy services, it is likely that children will be placed on a waitlist for a period for assessment or intervention. Following assessment there may still be a wait period for intervention if indicated. This waitlist is actively reviewed, and we will contact the family when we are able to progress the referral. All relevant referral information is shared with the therapist on allocation of the client.

Managing appointments

Once a therapist or assistant is allocated a client and commences the service, the therapist or assistant is responsible for managing their appointments with the client. They can manage this via phone or email and in collaboration with both the family and teachers. We ask that the family notify us in advance if there are planned school events that may impact on service delivery or planned family holidays. If intervention is provided by a therapy assistant, the supervising therapist will also collaborate with the school and the family to negotiate the time for the service to be delivered.

Costing

As a private service provider, Lil' Peeps charges for all services including assessment, intervention, collaboration, resource preparation, communication and reporting. Families are informed of all potential costs when initial referral is accepted. As a mobile service, travel fees are charged for services provided in homes, schools and the community.

Payment

Clients will be invoiced for ongoing intervention on a fortnightly basis (or on a basis determined by agreement between the family and Lil' Peeps OT). This may be prior to services, in a deposit format, or after services are completed. Invoices for assessment services are issued at the time the report is issued (draft or final). Payment will be via EFT transfer (bank details provided on the invoice) or Pay ID. Payment term is 7 days and receipts are issued once funds are received. Reminder notices are emailed for non-payment, where a $25 administration fee is incurred. If payment is not received after the 2nd reminder, services may be suspended, or debt recovery services used. Costs associated with debt recovery are passed onto the client.

Cancellation

When a client cancels a therapy session, 24 hours notice is required. The therapist or assistant will be informed as soon as possible by the family, and our administration team will then be informed. If cancellation occurs with less than 24 hours notice then a cancellation fee will be charged to the family. This fee equates to the session charge and travel where applicable. Please note if a school has an event planned on a scheduled therapy session, it is still the family's responsibility to inform the therapist and cancel the therapy appointment. If a therapist or therapy assistant must cancel a session, no charge will be incurred by the family.

Student placements

Lil' Peeps hosts Curtin and Notre Dame occupational therapy student placements. At times therapists may be requested to offer a work shadow opportunity for these students.