

Organization: Duluth Area Family YMCA Association

Internship Focus: Pediatric OT Intern

Location(s): This internship is available at any of our Early Learning Centers including the YMCA at the Essentia Wellness Center in Hermantown, the Superior Douglas County Family YMCA and the Cook County YMCA in Grand Marais



Hours: Flexible

Position Summary:

Supports the developmental and functional needs of children across infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms. This position collaborates with educators and families to implement strategies that enhance sensory processing, motor development, self-regulation, and independence. The role also contributes to creating inclusive, developmentally appropriate learning environments that promote meaningful participation for all children.

Essential Functions:

1. Observe and support children in infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms to understand developmental milestones.
2. Assist teachers with classroom strategies that promote self-regulation, motor development, and independence.
3. Support sensory-friendly environments by helping identify and implement calming and engaging tools/materials.
4. Model and encourage inclusive practices that help children of all abilities fully participate in daily routines and play.
5. Develop activities that promote fine motor, gross motor, and sensory development.
6. Collaborate with staff to create visual supports, adaptive tools, and play-based interventions.
7. Contribute to family engagement efforts by preparing resources/tip sheets for parents on child development and regulation.
8. Conduct mini-trainings for staff on practical OT-informed strategies (e.g., transitions, sensory breaks, adaptive seating).
9. Assist in monitoring and documenting developmental progress during play and daily routines.
10. Participate in team meetings and share insights from an OT perspective.

Examples of Potential Projects Include:

- Sensory Pathway Project: Design and implement a sensory path in a hallway or outdoor space for movement breaks.
- Self-Regulation Toolkits: Develop classroom “calm down” kits with visual supports, fidgets, and strategies for teachers to use.
- Family Workshop Series: Create a one-time parent session and/or newsletters on topics like fine motor readiness for kindergarten, managing sensory needs at home, or routines that build independence.
- Inclusive Play Audit: Assess playground/classroom spaces and make recommendations for inclusive, developmentally supportive play.

- Fine Motor Fun Center: Build a rotating activity station that strengthens pre-writing and self-help skills (buttons, zippers, scissors, etc.).

Required Qualifications:

1. Past experience working with children.
2. Solid understanding of child development in the early years.

Desired Qualities:

1. Familiar with play-based learning approaches.
2. Warm, kind and approachable.
3. Confident in working independently.
4. Open and authentic in your communication.
5. Good listening and keen observation skills.
6. Dependable and motivated.

Compensation:

1. Interns do receive a YMCA membership during their internship. You will also receive a great experience working in the non-profit sector with one of the largest non-profit organizations in the nation.
2. Access to selected early childhood and YMCA professional development trainings (we'll cover registration costs).
3. Opportunities to design and implement your own project with support from the Center Director.
4. Experience collaborating with teachers, families, and administrators in a licensed early learning environment.
5. A meaningful role supporting children's growth and development in a play-based setting.
6. Although this internship is unpaid, we will work with you and your school to assist you in receiving college credit. It is the responsibility of the student to determine if academic credit is available through their degree program.

Application Process:

YMCA Internship Application (found at www.duluthymca.org)

Cover Letter

Resume

Two letters of recommendation

Contact Information:

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Volunteer & Internship Coordinator

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