Definition of an Effective Occupational Therapist

Effective occupational therapists are vital members of the education team. They are properly credentialed and have knowledge of federal and state laws, evidence-based practices in educational settings and student occupational performance. Effective occupational therapists strive to support growth and development in the least restrictive environment, close achievement gaps and prepare diverse student populations for postsecondary and workforce success. Effective occupational therapists assist students in accessing academic instruction, environmental adaptations and meaningful activities through skill acquisition, environmental adaptations and educational accommodations and modifications. They provide collaborative and focused evaluations, determination of services based on student performance, service plan development and progress monitoring in the educational context. Effective occupational therapists have a deep understanding on the interconnectedness of the home, school and community. Through reflection, advocacy and leadership, they enhance the academic achievement and personal/social/physical development of their students.

Element A: Occupational therapists demonstrate knowledge of current developmental science, the ways in which learning takes place and the appropriate levels of intellectual, social and emotional development of their students.

The Occupational Therapist:
- Understands the relevance of normal developmental skill sequences to their work.
- Bases services and/or specially designed instruction on an understanding of developmental science.
- Appropriately plans services to the needs of specific students based on knowledge of developmental science.

Element B: Occupational therapists demonstrate knowledge of effective services and/or specially designed instruction that reduce barriers to and support learning in literacy, math and other content areas.

The Occupational Therapist:
- Identifies potential barriers to student access to academic and non-academic content areas.
- Designs services and/or specially designed instruction based on district/school adopted curriculum and Colorado academic standards.
- Reduces barriers to learning experienced by individual students within the learning environment.

Students and/or Significant Adults:
- Understand information related to their student’s developmental trajectory.
- Provide challenging learning activities representing appropriate developmental levels with the support of the occupational therapist.
- Engage in the educational environment at their developmental level as a result of a reduction of barriers to learning.
- Identify and participate in resolving barriers to learning in the educational environment.

Element C: Occupational therapists integrate evidence-based practices and research findings into their services and/or specially designed instruction.

Quality Standard I
Occupational therapists demonstrate mastery of and expertise in the domain for which they are responsible.

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THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:
- Understands the relevance of normal developmental skill sequences to their work.
- Bases services and/or specially designed instruction on an understanding of developmental science.
- Appropriately plans services to the needs of specific students based on knowledge of developmental science.

STUDENTS AND/OR SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:
- Understand information related to their student’s developmental trajectory.
- Provide challenging learning activities representing appropriate developmental levels with the support of the occupational therapist.
- Engage in the educational environment at their developmental level as a result of a reduction of barriers to learning.
- Identify and participate in resolving barriers to learning in the educational environment.
### Quality Standard I

Occupational therapists demonstrate mastery of and expertise in the domain for which they are responsible.

#### Evaluator Comments:

*Please indicate the element for which the comment applies if not for the standard as a whole.*

#### Comments of Person Being Evaluated:

*(Please indicate the element for which the comment applies if not for the standard as a whole)*

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**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- **Accesses research-based practices.**
- **Identifies current occupational therapy research relevant to student performance.**
- **Collaborates in the training of school personnel regarding evidence based interventions.**

**STUDENTS:**
- **Use a variety of research-based/evidence-based tools and strategies in learning.**

**STUDENTS AND/OR SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:**
- **Seek occupational therapist’s assistance to find resources and services to support student needs.**

**SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:**
- **Use a variety of research-based tools and strategies to support student learning.**

---

**ELEMENT D:** Occupational therapists demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of home, school and community influences on student achievement.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- **Has knowledge of the system of care including the family, school and/or community.**
- **Participates in a system of care for students, which include the family, school and/or community and their impact on student learning outcomes.**
- **Coordinates information from families and significant adults with other professionals who provide services to the student.**

**STUDENTS AND/OR SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:**
- **Partner with educational team for the benefit of the student.**
- **Express understanding of the purpose of educationally-related occupational therapy services and the benefits of such services.**

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**ELEMENT E:** Occupational therapists demonstrate knowledge of and expertise in their professions.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- **Is familiar with the standards and domain and process of occupational therapy.**
- **Is knowledgeable about the domain and process of occupational therapy practice including philosophy and practice concepts.**
- **Plans and implements occupational therapy services in accordance with nationally recognized professional practice.**

**STUDENTS:**
- **Participate in services that are in accordance with the domain and process of occupational therapy.**

**STUDENTS AND/OR SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:**
- **Seek occupational therapist’s assistance to find resources and services to support student needs.**
Quality Standard II
Occupational therapists support and/or establish safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments for a diverse population of students.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELEMENT A:</strong> Occupational therapists foster safe and accessible learning environments in which each student has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults and peers.</td>
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<td>THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:</td>
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<td>STUDENTS:</td>
<td>SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Understands the importance of a safe, accessible environment in which students experience a caring relationship.</td>
<td>□ Anticipates potentially hazardous situations and takes steps to prevent accidents.</td>
<td>□ Collaborates with other professionals to improve safety and accessibility to the school environment.</td>
<td>□ Safely access targeted school environment(s).</td>
<td>□ With the support of the occupational therapist, provide students with opportunities or strategies to engage in the development of positive peer relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>. . . and</td>
<td>□ Provides a caring relationship for each student.</td>
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<td>STUDENTS:</td>
<td>SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Safely access targeted school environment(s).</td>
<td>□ Respect the background of fellow students.</td>
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Quality Standard II
Occupational therapists demonstrate respect for diversity within the home, school and local and global communities.

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<tr>
<td><strong>ELEMENT B:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Understands the importance of respect for student diversity.</td>
<td>□ Understands the importance of equal access to programs and facilities for all students.</td>
<td>□ Respects diversity in home and community and educates others about disability awareness and the importance of inclusion.</td>
<td>□ Feel respected by the therapist.</td>
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<td>. . . and</td>
<td>□ Expands participation in the learning environment based on their strengths and interests.</td>
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Quality Standard II
Occupational therapists support and/or establish safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments for a diverse population of students.

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<tr>
<td><strong>ELEMENT C:</strong> Occupational therapists engage students as unique individuals with diverse backgrounds, interests, strengths and needs.</td>
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<td>STUDENTS AND SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Identifies each student’s strengths, interests and needs.</td>
<td>□ Establishes priorities and goals based on unique student interests, strengths and needs.</td>
<td>□ Modifies interventions to reflect unique student interests, strengths and needs.</td>
<td>□ Understand the importance of students’ unique interests, strengths and needs in achieving goals.</td>
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<td>□ Expands participation in the learning environment based on their strengths and interests.</td>
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**ELEMENT D:** Occupational therapists engage in proactive, clear and constructive communication and work collaboratively with students, families and other significant adults and/or professionals.
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<th><strong>THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>□ Understands the importance of clear, constructive communications.</td>
<td>□ Establishes effective communications with students, families and other significant adults.</td>
<td>□ Uses a variety of methods to communicate with students, families and other significant adults to promote sharing of pertinent information.</td>
<td>□ Feel comfortable communicating and interacting with the occupational therapist:</td>
<td>□ Appropriately share relevant information that may impact student performance with an understanding of confidentiality.</td>
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</table>

**ELEMENT E:** Occupational therapists select, create and/or support accessible learning environments characterized by acceptable student behavior, efficient use of time and appropriate behavioral strategies.

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<tr>
<td>□ Provides expectations that guide student behavior.</td>
<td>□ Modifies services in response to student behavioral needs.</td>
<td>□ Collaboratively creates an accessible learning environment with expectations for student behavior that maximize use of service time with student.</td>
<td>□ Abide by established expectations during therapeutic activities.</td>
<td>□ Demonstrate, with the support of the occupational therapist, behaviors that positively contribute to increased participation in school.</td>
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Quality Standard II
Occupational therapists support and/or establish safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments for a diverse population of students.

Evaluator Comments:
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Quality Standard III
Occupational therapists plan, deliver and/or monitor services and/or specially designed instruction and/or create environments that facilitate learning for their students.

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**ELEMENT A:** Occupational therapists provide services and/or specially designed instruction aligned with state and federal laws, regulations and procedures, academic standards, their districts’ organized plans of instruction and the individual needs of their students.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- ☐ Is aware of standards, regulations and laws that impact occupational therapy practice in the educational setting.

**. . . and**

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- ☐ Complies with timelines for state and federal legislation and local regulations and procedures.
- ☐ Ensures documentation is aligned with federal and state laws and district policies and/or procedures.
- ☐ Collaborates in the development of measurable student goals based on Colorado academic standards.

**. . . and**

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- ☐ Understand that the nature the services provided are determined by state and federal laws and budgetary issues.

**. . . and**

**STUDENTS AND SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:**
- ☐ Participate in the development of student learning goals.
Quality Standard III
Occupational therapists plan, deliver and/or monitor services and/or specially designed instruction and/or create environments that facilitate learning for their students.

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**ELEMENT B:** Occupational therapists utilize multiple sources of data, which include valid informal and/or formal assessments, to inform services and/or specially designed instruction.

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<td>Uses findings from program evaluation data to inform occupational therapy service delivery and specialized instruction.</td>
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<td>Selects and/or uses formal and informal assessments for evaluation of services.</td>
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<td>□ Contribute to the data collection process by identifying data sources and/or information relevant to them.</td>
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<td>□ Assesses environments in which student occupation occurs.</td>
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**ELEMENT C:** Occupational therapists plan and consistently deliver services and/or specially designed instruction that integrate multiple sources of data to inform practices related to student needs, learning and progress toward achieving academic standards and individualized student goals.

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<td>Maintains student data and/or documentation to plan services.</td>
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<td>Establishes and adapts service delivery model based on individual needs of students.</td>
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<td>□ Participate in educationally challenging activities based on therapist’s use of evaluation findings.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provides services in alignment with individual education programs based on the integration of multiple data sources.</td>
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<td>Facilitates the transition or exit process in collaboration with the educational team.</td>
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Quality Standard III
Occupational therapists plan, deliver and/or monitor services and/or specially designed instruction and/or create environments that facilitate learning for their students.

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<td><strong>ELEMENT D:</strong> Occupational therapists support and integrate appropriate available technology in their services and/or specially designed instruction to maximize student outcomes.</td>
<td>. . . and THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST: □ Uses appropriate available technology supports as determined by the educational team. □ Uses appropriate available technology to facilitate access to education.</td>
<td>. . . and THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST: □ Supports the use of appropriate available technology to maximize student outcomes.</td>
<td>. . . and STUDENTS: □ Express preferences for appropriate available adaptive equipment and/or technology verbally or non-verbally based on participation and ease of use.</td>
<td>. . . and STUDENTS: □ Use appropriate available assistive technology/adaptive equipment to support their learning and participation in the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ELEMENT E:</strong> Occupational therapists establish and communicate high expectations for their students that support the development of critical-thinking, self-advocacy, leadership and problem solving skills.</td>
<td>. . . and THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST: □ Communicates high expectations for all students.</td>
<td>. . . and THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST: □ Sets individual student expectations/goals at a level that challenges students.</td>
<td>. . . and STUDENTS: □ Respond positively to the therapist’s expectations.</td>
<td>. . . and STUDENTS: □ Demonstrate problem solving skills to improve functional independence based on the students’ developmental levels, skills and abilities.</td>
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Quality Standard III
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<td>ELEMENT F: Occupational therapists communicate effectively with students.</td>
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**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**

- Uses effective communication skills with students.
- Builds rapport with students.
- Allows time for student response and interaction.
- Provides positive feedback to student on performance.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**

- Modifies communication based on student, emotional and ability level.
- Works with colleagues to improve understanding of and ability to communicate with students who have diverse needs.

**STUDENTS:**

- Engage in positive dialogue during services, which expand the therapists understanding of students’ strengths, needs and interests.

**STUDENTS AND SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:**

- Understand and follow written and oral instructions to assist in therapeutic activities.

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**ELEMENT G: Occupational therapists develop and/or implement services and/or specially designed instruction unique to their professions.**

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**

- Selects activities that prepare students for engagement in the least restrictive environment.
- Conducts activity/task analysis to support the skills needed for a student to engage in an activity.
- Interprets results from task analyses to identify barriers to accessing the educational environment and provide services to improve success.
- Uses a variety of service delivery approaches to meet student needs.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**

- Uses a variety of service delivery approaches to meet student needs.

**STUDENTS AND SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:**

- Integrate recommendations to improve participation in the least restrictive environment.

**STUDENTS:**

- Participate in recommended occupational services based on their developmental level, skills and abilities.
**Quality Standard III**
Occupational therapists plan, deliver and/or monitor services and/or specially designed instruction and/or create environments that facilitate learning for their students.

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**Quality Standard IV**
Occupational therapists reflect on their practice.

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**ELEMENT A:** Occupational therapists demonstrate that they analyze student learning, development and growth and apply what they learn to improve their practice.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- Identifies methods and tools to collect student data.
  - Identifies methods and tools to collect student data.

  **THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
  - Collects and uses student learning development and growth data to inform practice.
  - Collects and uses student learning development and growth data to inform practice.

  **THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
  - Analyzes a wide range of student data to design and implement services.
    - Analyzes a wide range of student data to design and implement services.

    **THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
    - Provides analyses based on expertise to the educational team.

**ELEMENT B:** Occupational therapists link professional growth to their professional goals.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- Uses performance feedback from supervisor and/or colleagues to improve practice.
  - Uses performance feedback from supervisor and/or colleagues to improve practice.

  **THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
  - Participates in professional development opportunities that support professional learning plan.

  **THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
  - Develops a professional learning plan that builds on strengths and addresses areas in need of improvement.

  **THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
  - Collects data on implementation of newly learned strategies and makes modifications to support student outcomes.

**ELEMENT C:** Occupational therapists respond to complex, dynamic environments.

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<tr>
<td>☐ Understands the complexity and dynamic nature of the work environment.</td>
<td>☐ Seeks professional guidance to prioritize competing demands within the work environment.</td>
<td>☐ Effectively prioritizes competing demands within the work environment.</td>
<td>☐ Works to align student, teacher and parent priorities.</td>
<td>☐ Recognizes and willingly responds to the fluid demands of the work environment.</td>
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<td>☐ Acts as an agent of change for the department and/or the LEA.</td>
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**Comments of Person Being Evaluated:**

*(Please indicate the element for which the comment applies if not for the standard as a whole):*
**QUALITY STANDARD V**
Occupational therapists demonstrate collaboration, advocacy and leadership.

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**ELEMENT A:** Occupational therapists collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to meet the needs of students.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- Identifies key stakeholders in the lives of students.
- Collaborates with other professionals to support progress towards student outcomes.
- Initiates professional dialogue with other school providers to gather various perspectives to meet the needs of students.
- Initiates and/or supports collaborative communication with families.
- Integrates collaboratively shared information into services to benefit the student.
- Proactively shares own analyses of student needs with others.
- Establishes ongoing partnerships with external stakeholders to support the needs of students.

**ELEMENT B:** Occupational therapists advocate for students, families and schools.

**THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:**
- Advocates for students.
- Actively supports disability awareness at the school and district level.
- Advocates for curricular, school climate and service improvements.
- Plans and/or proposes educational programs for department and/or school staff which advocate for the needs of students.
- Have knowledge of how to access advocacy support and resources for the benefit of the student based on information provided by the occupational therapist.

**FAMILIES AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:**
- Have knowledge of how to access advocacy support and resources for the benefit of the student based on information provided by the occupational therapist.
QUALITY STANDARD V  
Occupational therapists demonstrate collaboration, advocacy and leadership.

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**ELEMENT C:** Occupational therapists demonstrate leadership in their educational setting(s).

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<tr>
<td>□ Accurately and appropriately defines occupational therapy services.</td>
<td>□ Recognizes opportunities to develop leadership skills.</td>
<td>□ Makes contributions from an occupational therapy perspective to school or district teams.</td>
<td>□ Shares knowledge through mentorship of colleagues.</td>
<td>□ Provides leadership to school-based teams in order to maximize the skills and knowledge of colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ELEMENT D:** Occupational therapists contribute knowledge and skills to educational practices and their profession.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:</th>
<th>. . . and</th>
<th>THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:</th>
<th>. . . and</th>
<th>THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:</th>
<th>. . . and</th>
<th>THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Contributes knowledge and skills to the educational work of the school.</td>
<td>□ Shares knowledge of student’s occupational performance within the context of IEP meetings.</td>
<td>□ Implements effective consultation strategies.</td>
<td>□ Develops consultative tools or programs to improve student outcomes.</td>
<td>□ Advocates for occupational therapists inclusion in educational reform/decision making processes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

□ Assumes additional duties and/or leadership roles in the department and/or school(s).  
□ Confers with school administrators and/or supervisors to improve working and learning conditions.
QUALITY STANDARD V
Occupational therapists demonstrate collaboration, advocacy and leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Proficient (Meets State Standard)</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**ELEMENT E: Occupational therapists demonstrate high ethical standards.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:</th>
<th>The occupational therapist demonstrates high ethical standards.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Maintains confidentiality of student records as required by law.</td>
<td>☐ Accepts responsibility for actions and decisions that affect student outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Upholds the professional Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Occupational Therapy.</td>
<td>☐ Follows district procedures for reporting unsafe or unethical practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Evaluator Comments:**
*Please indicate the element for which the comment applies if not for the standard as a whole.*

**Comments of Person Being Evaluated:**
*(Please indicate the element for which the comment applies if not for the standard as a whole):*