

# SEVERITY RATING SCALES: INDICATORS FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY

## Introduction

The purpose of these severity rating scales is to provide a tool to assist teachers in identifying the degree of impact a particular challenge has on a student. These severity rating scales are not exhaustive, and only cover some of the most common areas of concern.

This document includes severity rating scales for the following broad categories:

- Mobility
- Adaptive Equipment
- Transfers
- Participation

## How to Use This Document

- There is a separate severity rating scale for each category mentioned above.
- These scales
  - can be used to determine the level of impact a student is experiencing in a particular area;
  - are meant as a starting point, when concerns are noted, and services are being considered;
  - can be used to discuss appropriate services;
  - are designed so that each one can be used on its own, while recognizing that students may be impacted in more than one area.
- If moderate to severe concerns are identified on any of the scales, the concerns may be taken forward for discussion with additional school or jurisdiction personnel as per the school authority protocol.

**Note:** These scales are not meant to be used as a classroom screening tool.

## SEVERITY RATING SCALES/GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICES

### MOBILITY SEVERITY RATING SCALE

DEFINITION: Mobility is the ability to move freely within an environment in a safe and efficient manner. This may include walking, running, wheelchair propulsion, use of walker, etc.

**NOTE:** A formal assessment is NOT required to determine severity. However, if a formal assessment has already been completed within the last 6 months, that data would be used to help determine severity and service options.

**NOTE:** Teacher must review student record when concerns are identified for information about previous assessments, supports, and/or strategies which may still be applicable. If possible, consultation with previous teacher is encouraged.

**NOTE:** Most school authorities have school-based and/or jurisdiction based staff whose role is to support learning needs. These roles have varying titles across school jurisdictions (LST, SSF, LAT, LIFT, IEF, IC, SSC, Learning Coach, Central Coordinator). For the purpose of this document, this role is referred to as “Learning Support Facilitator” whether the role is being filled by a teacher, an administrator or a coordinator.

	<u>No Apparent Problem</u>	<u>Mild / Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
<b>Description of Mobility</b>	Student is able to move safely and efficiently without mobility aids	<p>*Student is able to move safely and efficiently <b>with</b> mobility aids, modifications and/or supports (cane, crutches, walker, orthotics, braces, etc.)</p> <p>*Student is able to move safely despite awkward or unusual body postures (i.e. toe walking, stumbling)</p>	<p>*Even with the provision of modifications, mobility aids, and/or supports student is unable to move safely and efficiently the majority of the time</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent falls</li> <li>• Frequent injury to self or peers due to instability</li> <li>• Takes excessive time to move within the school environment affecting time spent in the classroom</li> </ul>
<b>Impact on Education</b>	Acquisition of academic, social and/or functional skills is <b>not</b> affected	*Acquisition of academic, social, physical and/or functional skills <b>may be</b> affected less than half of their school day:	<p>*Acquisition of academic, social, physical and/or functional skills <b>is impaired more than half of the school day:</b></p> <p>*Student's mobility impairments <b>significantly</b> interferes with their school day (i.e. student unable to move within or between classes in a timely manner resulting in decreased learning time)</p>

		<p>*Requires minimal adaptation to participate in navigating classroom, hallways, gym class and/or recess (i.e. cues to watch where going, gym activities broken down into smaller parts, pre-teaching of new activities through small group or video)</p> <p>*Requires minimal adaptation to participate with peers (i.e. walk rather than run, jump rather than hop)</p>	
<b>Identification of Needs</b>		<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation</p> <p>*Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>*Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation</p> <p>*Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>*Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or “Learning Support Facilitator” may discuss identification of needs with PT (if available) according to school authority process.</p>
<b>Addressing Needs</b>		<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDS website <a href="#">PT Universal Strategies</a></p> <p>*Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDS website <a href="#">PT Universal Strategies</a></p> <p>*Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports <b>may</b> be available depending upon school jurisdiction.</p>

## SEVERITY RATING SCALES/GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICES ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT SEVERITY RATING SCALE

**DEFINITION:** Adaptive equipment includes but is not limited to: braces, orthotics, walkers, canes, crutches, standing frame, wheelchairs, slings, lifts, seating/positioning

**NOTE:** An assessment is NOT required to determine severity. However, if an assessment has already been completed within the last 6 months, that data would be used to help determine severity and service options.

**NOTE:** Teacher must review student record when concerns are identified for information about previous assessments, supports, and/or strategies which may still be applicable. If possible, consultation with previous teacher is encouraged.

**NOTE:** Most school authorities have school-based and/or jurisdiction based staff whose role is to support learning needs. These roles have varying titles across school jurisdictions (LST, SSF, LAT, LIFT, IEF, IC, SSC, Learning Coach, Central Coordinator). For the purpose of this document, this role is referred to as “Learning Support Facilitator” whether the role is being filled by a teacher, an administrator or a coordinator.

	<u>No Apparent Problem</u>	<u>Mild / Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
<b>Description of Equipment</b>	Student does not use or require adaptive equipment	<p>*Student can function safely and efficiently with existing equipment independently or with minimal support</p> <p>*For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walks independently with walker (cane, crutch, orthotics, brace)</li> <li>• Uses wheelchair independently</li> </ul>	<p>*Student is not functioning safely and efficiently with existing equipment</p> <p>*Student requires new equipment and/or modification of existing equipment</p> <p>*Staff requires education around equipment</p> <p>*Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walker tipping with walking</li> <li>• Size of adaptive equipment is not fitting</li> <li>• Staff unfamiliar with adaptive equipment and require education</li> <li>• Student’s ability to walk with walker has declined</li> </ul>

<p><b>Impact on Education</b></p>	<p>Acquisition of academic, social, physical and/or functional skills is <b>not</b> affected</p>	<p>*Acquisition of academic, social, physical and/or functional skills <b>may be</b> affected less than half of their school day:</p> <p>*Requires minimal external support with equipment (help applying or using equipment) to participate in school day or with peers.</p>	<p>*Acquisition of academic, social, physical and/or functional skills <b>is impaired more than half of the school day:</b></p> <p>*Student’s ability to participate in their school day or with peers is <b>significantly impacted</b> by their lack of appropriate equipment</p>
<p><b>Identification of Needs</b></p>		<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation</p> <p>*Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>*Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation</p> <p>*Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>*Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or “Learning Support Facilitator” may discuss identification of needs with PT (if available) according to school authority process.</p>
<p><b>Addressing Needs</b></p>		<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDS website <a href="#">PT Universal Strategies</a></p> <p>*Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDS website <a href="#">PT Universal Strategies</a></p> <p>*Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports <b>may</b> be available depending upon school jurisdiction.</p>

## SEVERITY RATING SCALES/GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICES

### TRANSFERS SEVERITY RATING SCALE

DEFINITION: Transfers refers to the movement of the student between surfaces. This may include physical assistance from staff, use of equipment to assist (i.e. grab bars, transfer belt, mechanical lift, etc.).

**NOTE:** An assessment is **NOT** required to determine severity. However, if an assessment has already been completed within the last 6 months, that data would be used to help determine severity and service options.

**NOTE:** Teacher must review student record when concerns are identified for information about previous assessments, supports, and/or strategies which may still be applicable. If possible, consultation with previous teacher is encouraged.

**NOTE:** Most school authorities have school-based and/or jurisdiction based staff whose role is to support learning needs. These roles have varying titles across school jurisdictions (LST, SSF, LAT, LIFT, IEF, IC, SSC, Learning Coach, Central Coordinator). For the purpose of this document, this role is referred to as “Learning Support Facilitator” whether the role is being filled by a teacher, an administrator or a coordinator.

	<u>No Apparent Problem</u>	<u>Mild / Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
<b>Description of Transfers</b>	Student does not require assistance for transferring between surfaces	<p>*Student is transferring <b>safely and efficiently</b> with existing procedure(s) and equipment</p> <p>*Requires minimal external support to transfer safely and efficiently between surfaces</p> <p>*May include transfers that are independent or require standby assistance, verbal cueing, use of transfer belt, etc.</p> <p>*May also include safe and efficient use of mechanical lift with good staff knowledge of process</p>	<p>Any of the following:</p> <p>*Student transfers are <b>not safe</b> (for student and/or staff) with existing procedure(s) and/or equipment</p> <p>*Student transfers are <b>not efficient</b> with existing procedure(s) and/or equipment</p> <p>*Student requires modification of equipment and/or procedure</p> <p>*Staff requires education around equipment or transfer procedure</p>
<b>Impact on Education</b>	Acquisition of social, physical and/or functional skills is <b>not</b> affected	*Acquisition of social, physical and/or functional skills <b>may be</b> affected occasionally during their school day:	*Acquisition of social, physical and/or functional skills <b>is frequently disrupted throughout the day:</b>

		<p>*Student's ability to participate in their school day is <b><i>minimally disrupted</i></b> by the transfer procedure(s) in place</p> <p>*Transfers are performed in a timely manner limiting time away from classroom instruction and time with peers</p>	<p>*Student's ability to participate in their school day is <b><i>significantly disrupted</i></b> by the transfer procedure(s) in place</p>
<b>Identification of Needs</b>		<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation</p> <p>*Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>*Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation</p> <p>*Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>*Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or "Learning Support Facilitator" may discuss identification of needs with PT (if available) according to school authority process.</p>
<b>Addressing Needs</b>		<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDS website <a href="#">PT Universal Strategies</a></p> <p>*Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDS website <a href="#">PT Universal Strategies</a></p> <p>*Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports <b>may</b> be available depending upon school jurisdiction.</p>

## SEVERITY RATING SCALES/GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICES PARTICIPATION SEVERITY RATING SCALE

DEFINITION: Participation describes the student’s active involvement in their school day to the best of their physical, emotional and cognitive ability. A referral to Physical Therapy would address the physical aspects the student requires to participate.

**NOTE:** An assessment is NOT required to determine severity. However, if an assessment has already been completed within the last 6 months, that data would be used to help determine severity and service options.

**NOTE:** Teacher must review student record when concerns are identified for information about previous assessments, supports, and/or strategies which may still be applicable. If possible, consultation with previous teacher is encouraged.

**NOTE:** Most school authorities have school-based and/or jurisdiction based staff whose role is to support learning needs. These roles have varying titles across school jurisdictions (LST, SSF, LAT, LIFT, IEF, IC, SSC, Learning Coach, Central Coordinator). For the purpose of this document, this role is referred to as “Learning Support Facilitator” whether the role is being filled by a teacher, an administrator or a coordinator.

	<u>No Apparent Problem</u>	<u>Mild / Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
<b>Description of Participation</b>	Student is able to participate in school activities without assistance or modifications	<p>*Student is able to participate in school activities with minor modifications</p> <p>*Examples of minor modifications for participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Education modifications to equipment/programming (i.e. larger ball, fewer repetitions, shorter distance, etc.)</li> <li>• Seating/Positioning changes (desk size, room for student, classroom obstacles, environmental barriers)</li> <li>• Break down activities into smaller, achievable parts</li> <li>• Cues for safety on playground</li> </ul>	<p>*Even with provision of minor modifications and supports, student requires a specialized program or major modification to existing program to facilitate participation/engagement in the school day</p> <p>*This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate activities beyond the teacher’s ability to make adaptations to allow the student to participate throughout their school day (i.e. physical education, recess, classroom)</li> </ul>
<b>Impact on Education</b>	Acquisition of academic, social, physical and/or functional skills is <b>not</b> affected.	*Acquisition of academic, social, physical and/or functional skills <b>may be</b> affected less than half of their school day	*Acquisition of academic, social, physical and/or functional skills <b>is impaired more than half of the school day</b>



		<p>*Requires minimal adaptation to participate in navigating classroom, hallways, gym class and/or recess</p> <p>*Requires minimal adaptation to participate with peers</p>	<p>*Student's physical impairments <b>significantly</b> interferes with participation throughout their school day</p>
<b>Identification of Needs</b>		<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation</p> <p>*Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>*Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation and screening. Attempt to determine what is the barrier to participation (vision, sensory, motor planning, understanding instruction, equipment, mobility, transfers, safety) to help identify the best discipline to address the concern.</p> <p>*Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>*Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or "Learning Support Facilitator" may discuss identification of needs with PT (if available) according to school authority process.</p>
<b>Addressing Needs</b>		<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDS website <a href="#">PT Universal Strategies</a></p> <p>*Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDS website <a href="#">PT Universal Strategies</a></p> <p>*Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports <b>may</b> be available depending upon school jurisdiction.</p>