

New education act for individuals with disabilities in Korea and the global trends of school based occupational therapy in 6 international countries (Korea, the U.S., Canada, Australia, Germany, and the U.K.)

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Introduction: This study analyzed the evolution of the new education act for individuals with disabilities in Korea. The results include data from analysis of policy and legislation and school based occupational therapy delivery models from Korea, the U.S., Canada, Australia, Germany, and the U.K.

Objective: To identify the current trend of school based occupational therapy practice and related legislation in six countries. The literature review and policy analysis by field research in those countries provided the benefits and barriers of school based practice in each country.

Design: Data analysis, policy analysis, literature review, and personal Interview were methods used to obtain data. **Setting:** A literature review was conducted in the United States in collaboration with researchers in special education and government agencies.

Variable Analysis: laws or policies to support current school based occupational therapy, salaries of school based occupational therapists, education and employment of school based occupational therapists, and service delivery models in each of the six countries.

Results: The main themes for school based occupational therapy in each country included school health service and education for children with special needs. Most of the countries adopted the service model from the United States school based occupational therapy practice. There was lack of evidence of the effectiveness of school-based occupational therapy. The service delivery model was related to the legal support for occupational therapy in the school system: from a medical purpose to an educational purpose. There were increased numbers of occupational therapists who work in the school environment and of students in special needs being treated by occupational therapist. Development of the new special education act in Korea, which included occupational therapy as a related service, provided a social advocacy process to build up the role of school based occupational therapy.

Conclusions: Findings in this study confirmed that many countries are aware of the role of occupational therapy in the school system, but only a few countries define the role of occupational therapist in law and policy. Social advocacy related to making new policy is necessary to promote a role for occupational therapists in the school system.