

# The Keep Our Promise to America's Children and Teachers Act (H.R. 764/S. 72)



## Position

The American Physical Therapy Association supports H.R. 764/S. 72, the Keep Our Promise to America's Children and Teachers Act, or PACT Act. H.R. 764 was introduced in the House of Representatives by Susie Lee, D-N.V.; and S. 72 was introduced in the Senate by Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.

The PACT Act would put Congress on a path to meet its obligation to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, known as IDEA, ensuring that special education and related services for children with disabilities is a priority in the federal budget.

## Background

Enacted in 1975, IDEA guarantees a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of their disability. Whenever possible, these students should be educated alongside their nondisabled same-aged peers. More than 6 million children between the ages of 3 and 21 are eligible for Part B of IDEA's special education and related services mandate. Nearly 400,000 children under the age of 3 and their families are supported by IDEA's early-intervention program, known as Part C.

To help states meet their obligation to all students, Congress created a funding standard when the law was enacted that would cover up to 40% of the costs for educational services for students with disabilities that exceed what is required for general education students. The current reality is that federal funding covers approximately 14.7% of the costs, creating a shortage of billions of dollars. Under IDEA, special education and related services must be provided at no cost, either direct or indirect, to the parent or other family custodian. While most funding for education comes from state and local governments, inadequate funding for IDEA must be addressed.

## Role of Physical Therapy and IDEA

Children with disabilities from infancy through high school graduation can benefit from physical therapist services. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants support families in promoting their children's

development, learning, and participation in family and community life by using their knowledge and skills specifically related to motor and self-care function, assistive technology, and medical and health care science to provide a unique contribution to school and early-intervention teams. PTs and PTAs provide services by collaborating with the team, exchanging information with the family, and integrating interventions into everyday routines, activities, and locations to help students benefit from early intervention and educational programs and experiences.

## Endorsing Organizations

- American Physical Therapy Association
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- American Psychological Association
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- American Federation of Teachers
- Alliance to Reclaim our Schools
- National Education Association
- National School Boards Association
- National Parent Teacher Association
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- Council for Exceptional Children
- The Arc
- National Center for Learning Disabilities
- The School Superintendent Association
- Spina Bifida Association
- Easterseals
- National Association of School Psychologists
- The Brain Injury Association
- National Disability Rights Network
- The American Council of the Blind
- National Down Syndrome Congress
- Council of Administrators of Special Education
- Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf
- SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities
- School Social Work Association of America
- Cure SMA

# Facts About Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants



## Who We Are

Physical therapists are movement experts who help to optimize people's physical function, movement, performance, health, quality of life, and well-being. Physical therapists evaluate, diagnose, and manage movement conditions for individuals, and they also provide contributions to public health services aimed at improving population health and the human experience. Physical therapist assistants are educated and licensed or certified clinicians who provide care under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist. PTs and PTAs care for people of all ages and abilities.

## What We Do

After performing an evaluation and making a diagnosis, physical therapists create and implement personalized plans based on best available evidence to help their patients improve mobility, manage pain and other chronic conditions, recover from injury, and prevent future injury and chronic disease. PTs and PTAs empower people to be active participants in their care and well-being. They practice collaboratively with other health professionals to ensure the best clinical outcomes.

## Where We Practice

PTs and PTAs provide services to people in a variety of settings, including outpatient clinics or offices; hospitals; inpatient rehabilitation facilities; skilled nursing, extended care, or subacute facilities; education or research centers; schools; community centers; hospices; industrial, workplace, or other occupational environments; and fitness centers and sports training facilities.

## Education and Licensure

As of 2016, all PTs must receive a doctor of physical therapy degree from an accredited physical therapist education program before taking and passing a national licensure exam that permits them to practice. Licensure is required in each state (or other jurisdiction, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) in which a PT practices. PTAs must complete a two-year associate's degree from an accredited physical therapist assistant program and pass a national exam. State licensure or certification is required in each state (or jurisdiction) in which a PTA works.

## American Physical Therapy Association

The American Physical Therapy Association is a national organization representing more than 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students nationwide. Our mission is to build a community that advances the profession of physical therapy to improve the health of society.



**Cosponsor H.R. 764/S. 72 Today!**

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