



CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES: PHYSICAL, OCCUPATIONAL, AND SPEECH THERAPIES FOR CHILDREN UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE

Benefit Type: Medi-Cal
 Effective Date: 3/5/2026
 Last Review/Update: 2/25/2026
 Plan Documents: [2026 Medi-Cal Member Handbook](#)

Clinical Practice Guidelines: The state Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Provider Manual
<https://mcweb.apps.prd.cammis.medi-cal.ca.gov/publications/manual>

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) – Medi-Cal Providers
https://mcweb.apps.prd.cammis.medi-cal.ca.gov/assets/032769EA-D044-4B1D-A973-C617165FE3BE/epsdt.pdf?access_token=6UyVkrRfByXTZEWIh8j8QaYyIPyP5ULO

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article-abstract/141/1/MeetingAbstract/45/1633/The-Effectiveness-of-Occupational-Physical-and?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

https://www.aap.org/en/practice-management/bright-futures/?srsltid=AfmB0opzeUdhmPRwtVeBEYTDetmydx080G-VcWG2_95oz8DpT6ks0cNat9

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)
<https://www.apta.org/patient-care/evidence-based-practice-resources/cpgs>

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
<https://www.aota.org/practice/practice-essentials/evidencebased-practiceknowledge-translation/practice-guidelines>

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
https://www.asha.org/policy/?srsltid=AfmB0orxmKXzXqKuvb26UV3a9_0rmbJ-ZBFLk7zsdVaTZSIOWq4I8PvFr

Overview

Gold Coast Health Plan’s (GCHP) clinical practice guidelines are designed to aid physicians’ and practitioners’ diagnosis, treatment, and clinical decision making for specific health conditions. Additionally, GCHP provides guidance on available programs and devices to support the management of patients under 21 years of age with identified physical, occupational, and speech therapy needs.

Definitions

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT): A comprehensive, federally mandated Medicaid benefit for individuals under the age of 21.

Policy Statement

GCHP covers medically necessary physical, occupational, and speech therapies, including services necessary to correct or ameliorate defects and physical and mental illnesses and conditions discovered by screening services as outlined by the DHCS EPSDT program.

GCHP does **not cover** experimental / investigational services, services to treat sensory processing disorder, or services covered by other state supported agencies such as those provided by:

1. Regional Centers / Early Start: Based on eligibility for children under 3 years of age
2. Local Educational Agencies: Educational goals
3. California Children’s Services (CCS): Based on medical eligibility

Behavior modification can be addressed by Behavioral Health Treatment (BHT) / Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapies. For additional information, refer to [DHCS Behavioral Health Treatment](#).

All outpatient physical, occupational, and speech therapies require prior authorization. Refer to [GCHP Provider Resources](#) for additional information and authorization requirements.

Referrals

Submit referrals through the [GCHP Provider Portal](#).

Complex Care Management (CCM)

To make a referral to GCHP Care Management or to speak with the Care Management Department, call 1-805-437-5656 or email CareManagement@goldchp.org.

References/Resources

Title 22 CCR Sections 51340, 51340.1 Requirements Applicable to EPSDT Supplemental Services Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT).

Available at: <https://www.macpac.gov/subtopic/epsdt-in-medicaid/#:~:text=All%20children%20under%20age%2021,they%20become%20serious%20or%20disabling>. Accessed Feb. 2026

GCHP Medi-Cal Services Requiring Prior Authorization

Available at: https://res.cloudinary.com/dpmykpsih/raw/upload/gold-coast-site-258/media/r/2864ec9de9a84cf7a2c963d8a1ee08dd/gchp_serv_req_prior_auth_form_jun2025_v2p.pdf Accessed Feb. 2026

DHCS Questions About California Children’s Services (CCS)

Available at: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/forms/Forms/ChildMedSvcForms/dhcs4480.pdf> Accessed Feb. 2026

DHCS Medical Therapy Program

Available at: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs/Pages/MTP.aspx> Accessed Feb. 2026

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Treatment

Available at: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/BehavioralHealthTreatment.aspx> Accessed Feb. 2026

GCHP Provider Resources

Available at: <https://www.goldcoasthealthplan.org/for-providers/provider-resources/> Accessed Feb. 2026

GCHP Provider Portal

Available at: <https://www.goldcoasthealthplan.org/for-providers/provider-portal/> Accessed Feb. 2026

Appealing an Unfavorable Decision

Available at: GCHP website at <https://www.goldcoasthealthplan.org/> Accessed Feb. 2026

MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE GUIDELINE HISTORY			
Adopted By MAC	Reapproved	Revised	Retired
January 24, 2019			
	January 23, 2020		
	January 21, 2021		
	January 20, 2022		
	January 19, 2023		
MAC Sunset on July 18, 2024			
CREDENTIALS / PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE (CPRC) GUIDELINE HISTORY			
Adopted By MAC	Reapproved	Revised	Retired
		March 6, 2025	
		March 5, 2026	