



Welcome to Skills on the Hill!

We are grateful that you have chosen to work with our practice for your family's pediatric therapy needs. Please use this handbook as a guide for frequently asked questions and a reminder of policies that you agreed to upon starting services with us. We are so excited to work with your family and look forward to the growth that your child will make while working with our team.

Sincerely,
Skills on the Hill

Scheduling, Attendance, Late Arrival & Late Pick-Up Policies

As you and your child have made the commitment to therapy, we have made the same commitment to you in reserving your scheduled weekly time slot(s). Excessive absences affect your child's rate of progress and take away valuable therapy time another child may need who is on our waiting list. We expect clients to consistently attend scheduled appointments. Please give us as much advance notice as possible if you need to cancel an appointment. This includes changes in schedules due to school field trips, vacation plans, and medical appointments. Generally, we do not require families or caregivers to stay on site during the session, but we reserve the right to ask them to stay in specific cases.

If there is a Federal Holiday (usually occurring on a Monday) or school is canceled because of weather conditions, assume that Skills on the Hill will be open unless you are contacted by SOTH to cancel or reschedule treatment. Skills on the Hill is a medical practice, and we do not follow the typical school calendar or district weather-based operating decisions. Skills on the Hill is closed 6 days during the year: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day, and two additional days during the Winter Break (which adjust each year based on the calendar). On days Skills on the Hill is closed, we will do our best to reschedule your session to ensure continuity of care.

For patients who are members of the Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN) plan or Virginia Medicaid HMO plans (Molina, Aetna Better Health Virginia), whether it be their primary or secondary insurance plan, Skills on the Hill follows the rules for all Medicaid Managed Care Organizations in the District of Columbia & Virginia. Federal and state policies prohibit our practice from charging Medicaid members for missed or canceled appointments. As such, adherence to Skills on the Hill's attendance policy is of utmost importance for the following reasons:

- HSCSN & Virginia Medicaid HMOs will only authorize therapy for services that are considered medically necessary
- HSCSN & Virginia Medicaid HMOs require SOTH to routinely provide session notes and progress reports showing progress toward therapy goals and objectives is being demonstrated or observed so as to validate the need for ongoing services.
- If a HSCSN or Virginia Medicaid HMOs member/parent is not: consistently attending the authorized amount of therapy sessions, demonstrating progress with plan of care, and following through with strategies and prescribed home exercise program as part of plan of care, then HSCSN & Virginia Medicaid HMOs may choose to not continue authorizing therapy services.



Appointment Scheduling

Therapy sessions are scheduled for frequency and duration according to the plan of care set by the evaluating therapist. Skills on the Hill schedules appointments in two ways:

1. **Recurring weekly appointments:** Our typical scheduling format includes recurring weekly timeslots with the same therapist. SOTH works as best as we can to meet the scheduling needs of the families we work with and maintain consistency of care, but it should be noted that after-school timeslots are extremely popular, and we therefore might have limited availability. If a therapist is out of the office, you will be given reschedule options to ensure continuity of care.
2. **Flex scheduling:** For families who are unable to make the commitment for a weekly appointment slot, the Flex scheduling option provides a week-to-week scheduling option.

CareFirst/ BCBS Primary & HSCSN/Virginia Medicaid MCO Secondary Scheduling

For patients who have CareFirst/ BCBS as their primary insurance provider and HSCSN or a Virginia Medicaid MCO plan as their secondary insurance provider, sessions will be scheduled out in groups of 6 successive appointments. To schedule 6 additional appointments, the family must provide necessary EOB documentation so that Skills on the Hill can submit for HSCSN/Virginia Medicaid MCO secondary reimbursement. If the family has not provided the required documentation, additional sessions will not be scheduled. In the case of a lapse in appointment scheduling, the timeslot will be held for 1 week of a missed session. If 2 consecutive sessions are missed due to missing EOB information, then the patient will lose their recurring therapy slot. When the documentation is brought in, the patient can be put back on the schedule. If a family stays on top of bringing in current EOB information, there should be no difficulty in maintaining the therapy schedule.

Weather Closures

Skills on the Hill prioritize safety of the SOTH community and maintaining continuity of care when deciding on operating status due to winter weather. SOTH makes its own decision on operating status and does not follow the status of local school districts. Families impacted by weather-related closures will receive an email or phone call from either their therapist or the office Front Desk notifying them of the closure and to reschedule the appointment. There will also be a blast email to the SOTH community sent out regarding operating status once the decision is made.

Missed Appointments

A cancellation made within less than 24 hours or a missed appointment (“no-show”), including evaluations, will be charged a fee (prorated for shorter sessions) and a fee per discipline for co-treatments. Fees do not apply for patients who have Medicaid insurance that we are in network with.

If a patient misses more than 25% of scheduled appointments within an individual discipline (ie. OT, PT, Speech) for two months in a row, the patient will lose his/her permanent weekly appointment time for that discipline and be given the choice to be on our flex scheduling program which offers more flexibility for families. Exceptions to this policy may be made in the event of an emergency or illness.

Please do not bring a sick child to therapy. A child must be free of fever, pink eye, lice, or diarrhea for 24 hours before resuming therapy sessions. They will not be able to perform to their full potential. Please see our policy in this handbook for guidance on COVID-19.

No charge or penalty will be applied for a therapist cancellation. We will make every effort to make up such sessions.

Late Arrival

Therapy is scheduled for a particular duration of time, and it cannot be extended beyond your scheduled appointment time should you come late for your appointment.

If you are late for an appointment, even with notification, a late fee will be applied. Please note that such fees are not able to be charged to insurance; your credit card will be charged at the time of service. If the child arrives with less than 8 minutes remaining on their appointment, the appointment is canceled, and a no-show fee is charged. Fees do not apply to families with Medicaid insurances that we are in network with.

Late Pick-Up

A therapy session includes two important parts: 1) direct treatment AND 2) consultation time. Direct treatment will be stopped about 10 minutes prior to the end of therapy for a 60-minute session, and 5 minutes prior to the end of therapy for a 30-minute session. This time will be used to provide consultation to debrief the session, discuss home program activities, and to discuss any other related topics or questions.

It is your responsibility to be present for the consultation time to receive necessary feedback regarding your child's progress in therapy as well as ensuring your child will be picked up in a timely manner. There will be a fee charged to you if you are more than 10 minutes late to pick up at the end of your session, even with notification. Fees do not apply to families with HSCSN insurance.

Sick Policy

1. No child or adult who presents with or experienced any of the following indicators in the last 24 hours will be permitted into the clinic: fever of 100.4°F or above, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, any rash that could be contagious, lice, severe cough different from baseline.
2. If a family cancels a session on the same day due to the child being sick, there will be no cancellation fee.
3. If a child exhibits signs of any illness (vomiting, emergence of rash, prolonged coughing, the start of a fever) during a session at the clinic, the session will be suspended immediately. The therapist will call the parent/guardian and the child will go home.

Respiratory Illness Policy

SOTH community members experiencing any respiratory or flu-like symptoms such as fever and chills with cough, sore throat, head and muscle ache, nasal congestion and fatigue should not come to the clinic or should leave the clinic to go home. SOTH community members should stay home from the

clinic until they have no symptoms other than light cough or congestion for 24 hours without medication. A community member must stay home to monitor symptoms for 24 hours after testing positive for COVID19.

Community members can plan to return to the clinic 24 hours after fever subsides without the use of fever lowering medications. Community members can come to the clinic with a lingering cough or congestion as long as it is not worsening and there are no other symptoms. Any community member experiencing a cough or congestion must mask at all times, if able, until these symptoms have subsided completely. Employees in this circumstance are expected to take precautions such as distancing from others or improving air flow, when possible, to reduce the spread of disease. If a community member tests positive for COVID19, RSV, or flu, they must mask for at least 5 days from the positive test or until all symptoms subside, whichever is longer. If the community member is unable to mask, they are asked to not come to the clinic during that 5 day period.

All SOTH community members have a duty to practice healthy hygiene habits to prevent the spread of disease, and an expectation of coming to an environment free of influenza-like illness. In most cases SOTH follows the guidelines given by the CDC. For any additional information regarding respiratory illness or the treatment please refer directly to their site.

[Plan Of Care Compliance for Physical Therapy](#)

For patients receiving physical therapy, plans of care that are developed from initial evaluations and re-evaluations require a doctor's signature for certification. Continuing services requires a new MD signature if frequency of plan of care changes, long-term goals change or if there is any hospitalization. Skills on the Hill will send out the required documents to your child's pediatrician and will call up to 2 additional times. It is often helpful if the family themselves follows up asking for the signature. This can speed the process along and help therapy get started or resume faster. If certified plans of care are not signed and returned within 30-days of beginning services and/or a new plan of care development, physical therapy sessions will be paused. Upon receiving the signed plan of care, physical therapy sessions will be reinstated.

[Physical Aggression of Clients & Safety](#)

SOTH is set up to accommodate clients with mild and infrequent moderate aggressive behavior. To maintain the safety of the SOTH staff and clients, SOTH will have to adjust the plans of care of any clients who exhibit consistent aggressive or physical behavior. A SOTH therapist can cut a session short to maintain safety. In this instance, the therapist will notify an aide or the Front Desk Manager to have the parent/guardian call to come pick the child up early.

A session will be ended after the instance of any of the following behaviors:

- Restraining a client >2 instances of over 2-3 minutes
- >2 instances of scratching
- >2 instances of hitting/kicking, with intention to hurt
- A bite

If aggressive behaviors become a consistent part of treatment sessions, the course of treatment might be adjusted.

When there is an instance of aggressive behavior: the session ends early.

- If there are 2 consecutive instances of aggressive behaviors that resulted in the session ending early, SOTH will pause services and have a meeting with the child's team to figure out the next best steps.
- If 2 out of 4 sessions are ended early due to aggression, SOTH will pause services and have a meeting with the child's team to figure out the next best steps.

In the case that services are paused, the following options will be discussed:

- If appropriate, a child's behavioral therapist is invited into the session
- Referral to a different therapy program
- Different mode of treatment; consider teletherapy or treatment in another location if feasible or appropriate.

Restraints will only be done by people trained to restrain. The first attempt should ALWAYS be body blocking, setting up the environment in a very specific way, and stepping back to allow the child to have space when they and the treating therapist are safe. All clinical staff and some administrative staff at SOTH are trained in Crisis Prevention via CPI to maintain a safe working and clinical environment. If the staff member is not CPI trained upon being hired at SOTH, SOTH will train them. If restraints are used, a debrief should occur between treating therapist and the patient's family.

Please also be aware that to maintain the safety of all clients, families must remain outside of the treatment spaces when not accompanied by a SOTH staff member.

Instances of Biases

Skills on the Hill does not tolerate instances of bias towards any member of the SOTH community (client, family members, or staff members), including instance of racism, sexism, or statement of bias due to any other factor (LGBTQIA+ status, disability status, religion, etc.). Continued harmful behavior towards SOTH community members will not be tolerated. If a patient or family has displayed multiple instances of bias across multiple people or repeated instances of biases towards one person, services can or will be discontinued all together.

Reporting an Incident

Incident reports need to be filled out during any instance of medical emergency or aggression on the part of an employee or a patient. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Aggression towards a therapist
- Aggression between clients
- Medical emergency that required intervention for client
- Medical emergency that required intervention for therapist

- Instance of racism, sexism, or statement of bias against staff member or client due to any other factor (LGBTQIA+ status, disability status, religion, etc.)
- Any incident that occurs in any setting (schools, clinic, aquatics, group, Easy Rider)

If you would like to report an incident during your time at SOTH, please speak to the Front Desk Representative, who will then connect you to our HR manager.

Clinic Evacuation

Arlington, Virginia Office Location

1. Exit the building as quickly and safely as possible
 - Ensure that all staff members, clients, and families understand that there is an emergency. Treating therapists are responsible for relaying information to their clients. Front Desk staff is responsible to relaying information to people in waiting room.
 - Two staircases are available, one located on either end of the building, one near each suite. Take the stairs when evacuating.
 - Clients in wheelchairs:
 - Do not carry patient down the stairs unless the patient is small enough to carry on a hip (likely <5 years old)
 - Do not carry if there any spinal concerns or contraindications
 - Use the Evacuation Chair when appropriate
 - Patients <2 years old, carry if able to in order to decrease foot traffic on stairs.
2. Meet across the street from the vet office, in front of the church on Wayne
 - Front Desk staff is responsible for noting attendance and ensuring all clients and staff members are accounted for
 - This is closest to the 125 suite; if exiting out of 121 suite then therapist and client should walk around the building to the meet up area

Capitol Hill, Washington DC Location

1. Exit the building as quickly and safely as possible
 - Ensure that all staff members, clients, and families understand that there is an emergency. Treating therapists are responsible for relaying information to their clients. Front Desk staff is responsible to relaying information to people in waiting room.
 - Two staircases are available; one between the office door and the small office door that leads to the front of the building to the small parking lot on 13th, and then another off the side of the waiting room that leads up through the small treatment room upstairs onto Pennsylvania Ave.
 - Clients in wheelchairs:
 - Do not carry patient up the stairs unless the patient is small enough to carry on a hip (likely <5 years old)
 - Do not carry if there any spinal concerns or contraindications
 - Use the Evacuation Chair when appropriate
 - Patients <2 years old, carry if able to in order to decrease foot traffic on stairs.

2. Meet across the street in front of the apartment buildings on 13th street
 - Front Desk staff is responsible for noting attendance and ensuring all clients and staff members are accounted for

Insurance and Payment Information

Please refer to your Financial Agreement that you signed prior to starting services for information specific to your insurance coverage and costs. If your insurance changes at any time, it is your responsibility to notify Skills on the Hill of the change or lapse in coverage.

Any delinquent balance in excess of \$1000 will result in the cancellation and postponement of all services provided by Skills on the Hill until the account is paid in full, or a payment plan is established with the Skills on the Hill Billing Department.

If a family pays by check and the check is returned, the family will have 10 days from date of contact to present to the clinic a certified cashier's check for the Outstanding Balance plus the Returned Check Fee plus an additional fee for the administrative time spent due to the situation.

If your account is 30 days past due, you will incur an interest charge. After 65 days, delinquent accounts will be sent to our collection agency.

Families can find their most recent statement balances in the Patient Portal. Please contact SOTH for assistance logging in. We recommend looking in the portal first for inquiries about your statement. You may also set up automatic alerts via email and text message notifying you when a statement or balance is due.

SOTH requires a credit card to be always kept on file for all patients. We will charge your card for the balance due 5 to 7 days after the billing statement has been emailed. If you should have a question when you receive the billing statement, please contact us at 202-544-5439 extension 3 or at billing@skillsonthehill.com