Post-Professional Doctor of Physical Therapy - Pediatric Science

Rocky Mountain University

Program Highlights			
Program Director	Janet Tankersley PT, DPT, PhD, PCS janet.tankersley@rm.edu		
Executive Advisor & Founding Program Director	Jane Sweeney PT, PhD, PCS, FAPTA jane.sweeney@rm.edu		
Quick Facts			
Semesters	**Credits**	**Starts**	**Program Style**
3 *Optional 4th*	24	Summer	Online
Unique Program Highlights			
Faculty	Renowned doctoral faculty from multiple clinical settings		
Specialization	Specialization in pediatric science while meeting the Doctor of Physical Therapy academic requirements		

Admission Requirements
• A bachelor's degree or master's degree from an accredited institution (or foreign equivalent) with a minimum 3.0 cumulative physical therapy curriculum GPA • Minimum of six months of clinical experience in pediatric physical therapy is required prior to submitting an application for submission. *See University Website for all specific requirements

Program Description

Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions offers the only post-professional Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program in the US created for the Pediatric Physical Therapist clinician. This post-professional program provides specialized study in pediatrics while meeting academic requirements focused on evidence-based practice analysis and application.

The program highlights aspects of pediatric science such as pediatric pharmacology and imaging, pediatric medical screening and differential diagnosis, pediatric gait, early intervention and school-based practice issues, leadership and consultation in pediatric settings, and inter-professional collaboration in pediatric global health. An individually designed pediatric science capstone project allows students to develop a clinical, teaching, or administrative project related to pediatrics.

The post-professional DPT program model is designed for pediatric physical therapist practitioners with a bachelor's or master's degree to pursue a clinical doctorate without relocating.

Program Model ONLINE:
The program model is an online format with intermittent virtual evening webinars. Optional, synchronous virtual sessions are available during semesters 1 and 3 during the 4 day intensive on-campus sessions attended by our hybrid learners.

Program Outcomes:
- Develop knowledge and demonstrate application of evidence-based practice principles and processes.
- Conduct evidence-based, reflective analyses of pediatric physical therapy procedures including screening, examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, care plans, intervention, and outcomes assessment.
- Analyze inter-professional collaboration processes in local clinical and global health settings.
- Expand technical writing and professional presentation competencies.
- Explore leadership and consultation principles, models, and dynamics in preparation for future professional service contributions.
- Analyze and expand understanding of pediatric science literature with clinical application for varied pediatric practice roles, procedures, and settings in partial preparation for later Pediatric Clinical Specialist certification by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties.

Program Calendar

Semester	Course	Credits
Semester 1 Summer 2026	P 735 Topics in Pediatric Gait: Seminar & Lab	1
	P 721.3 Scientific Writing & Professional Presentations	1
	P 741 Pediatric Science Capstone Seminar	1
	P 737 Evidence-Based Practice	3
	Semester Total:	**6**
Semester 2 Fall 2026	P 709 Quantitative Issues in Published Research	2
	P 744 Pediatric Differential Diagnosis	2
	P 738 Pediatric Pharmacology & Imaging	1
	P 739 Pediatric Practice Analysis	2
	Semester Total:	**7**
Semester 3 Winter 2027	P 703 Seminar on Children & Youth in Early Intervention & Education Environments	2
	P 702 Leadership in Pediatric Physical Therapy	3
	P 705 Interprofessional Global Health in Pediatrics	2
	P 742 Pediatric Science Capstone *(course may also be taken in Semester 4, see below)*	4
	Semester Total:	**11**
Semester 4 Summer 2027	P 742 Pediatric Science Capstone *(if taken during this semester. Program Director Approval required)*	(4)
	P 736 National Board Examination Processes and Preparation: Pediatric Specialty Certification and National Physical Therapy Licensure *(optional course)*	(2)
	Semester Total:	**(6)**
	Total Program Required Credits:	**24**

NOTE: On-site components and dates are subject to change.

Course Descriptions

P 702 Leadership in Pediatric Physical Therapy (3 credits)

Models and perspectives are analyzed for administrating, leading, and consulting in pediatric therapy settings with strategies included for managing challenging work dynamics. Self-reflection is conducted on personal leadership style and approaches within the combined framework of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence model and Hagberg's Real Power model. Cultural Intelligence models are analyzed across a range of intercultural, inclusion, and ethical contexts involving children, families, and professional team members. A strategic planning format for future consultation opportunities is examined, and students present future consultation projects for analysis and discussion.

P 703 Seminar on Children & Youth in Early Intervention & Education Environments (2 credits)

This course includes discussion and application of laws, practice guidelines, and service delivery models for early intervention and school-based practice settings. Development and use of individualized family service plans and individualized education programs are addressed. Clinical decision-making frameworks are used with peer-reviewed literature to analyze and support selected interventions through case-based presentations.

P 705 Interprofessional Global Health in Pediatrics (2 credits)

This course blends interprofessional education with global health perspectives for pediatric practitioners. Discussion and application of competencies and principles are prioritized to define and guide pediatric practice when caring for children in resource-limited settings both locally and internationally. A framework is addressed for interprofessional training in cross-cultural competency, ethics, health equity, human rights, advocacy, capacity development, and partnership engagement. Using this framework, students will analyze and present a pediatric case from the perspective of a globally-minded, globally competent practitioner.

P 709 Quantitative Topics in Published Research (2 credits)

This course involves the study of basic statistics, data analysis methods, and results commonly reported by authors in physical therapy literature. Students will interpret statistics reported in journal articles and make judgments about the appropriateness of reported methods, interpretations, and conclusions based on research designs, data, and assumptions underlying applied statistical methods. Examples from current physical therapy literature will be cited throughout the course to illustrate concepts and improve students' abilities to interpret and critique the work of others. An overview of survey research methods as well as data analysis and data display strategies are provided for use in Pediatric Science Capstone projects and in clinical practice (client / parent satisfaction surveys and needs assessments).

P 721.3 Scientific Writing & Professional Presentations (1 credit)

An overview is provided on structure, process, and ethical context of scientific writing for the medical literature including mechanics and common challenges in technical writing, steps in preparing for publication, and processes for research grant applications. Obstacles of writer's block and procrastination are analyzed. Ethical analyses of unintentional plagiarism and appropriate citation and permission for using the intellectual property (slides; resources) of others are explored. Strategies are reviewed and evaluated for professional presentations (poster and platform), international presentations with a translator, and media interviews.

P 735 Topics in Pediatric Gait: Seminar & Lab (1 credit)

This course focuses on the development of pre-and-early ambulation in a population predisposed to rapid and dramatic changes: birth to three year old infants and toddlers. The effects of biomechanics, neuromuscular and sensory systems, orthotics, and tone management are integrated during learning activities to build intervention strategies to address ambulation early and effectively. Clinical application involves children with diagnoses of cerebral palsy, developmental delay, prematurity, or Down Syndrome. Lab sessions involve group work with developing a clinical algorithm (process map) and practicing techniques with a class member.

P 736 National Board Examination Processes and Preparation: Pediatric Specialty Certification and National Physical Therapy Licensure (2 credits)

This elective course is focused on application, preparation, resources, and perceived challenges to national and specialty board examinations for pediatric physical therapists and international physical therapists. Analysis and review of key areas of the board examinations are prioritized. Focused self-assessment of study priorities guides individual study plans and group presentations. Strategies are highlighted for test anxiety, time management, and resource acquisition. This course provides opportunity and support for pediatric clinical specialists and international pediatric clinicians to prepare for national board examinations at the end of focused study in the post- professional Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

P 737 Evidence-Based Practice (3 credits)

This course is designed to prepare healthcare professionals with the knowledge and skills to make independent judgments about the validity of clinical research and to implement evidence-based clinical practice. The course focuses on the concepts of evidence-based practice with emphasis on forming answerable clinical questions, designing and evaluating PICO questions, and creating effective literature search strategies on pediatric science topics. The evaluative approach to appraising the research literature prepares students to judge the evidence on the: 1) accuracy and validity of diagnostic tests and application of important diagnostic tests in the care of a specific patient; 2) effectiveness of clinical interventions; 3) natural history of health-related conditions; and 4) risk of harm from select preventive and therapeutic interventions. Based on presentation of case scenarios, students are required to formulate the key question(s), rapidly search medical and health-

related databases, appraise the evidence with a critical analysis, and describe application of the evidence in a clinical context related to pediatrics.

P 738 Pediatric Pharmacology & Imaging (1 credit)
In this course, pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics of commonly prescribed medications and over-the-counter drugs are addressed for children receiving physical therapy. Potential drug complications of adverse effects and interactions are reviewed. An overview of brain and musculoskeletal imaging procedures occurs with emphasis on the neonatal brain and common musculoskeletal pathology in children. Students present pediatric cases and describe related imaging and pharmacological components.

P 739 Pediatric Practice Analysis (2 credits)
This directed independent study provides each student with an individually tailored opportunity for an evidence-based, reflective analysis of pediatric physical therapy practices. With evidence-based competencies gained from the P 737 course in the first semester, this project allows the pediatric physical therapist to analyze care processes implemented for a selected infant, child, or youth related to current best evidence.

P 741 Pediatric Science Capstone Seminar (1 credit)
In this seminar course, students have the opportunity to develop and present proposed pediatric science capstone topics, purpose and scope, feasibility issues, literature support, and potential obstacles. A method for determining effectiveness of each capstone project will be presented and discussed. A formal presentation with slides and facilitated discussion with peers will occur. Students will provide formal introductions of speakers. Written peer and instructor feedback are provided to enhance future presentation skills and leadership.

P 742 Pediatric Science Capstone (4 credits)
The pediatric science capstone involves an individualized experience to expand knowledge, competency, and teaching in pediatrics. The project topic and design are negotiated with the faculty member and can be achieved in a variety of settings (clinical, education, administration). The capstone project may focus on 1) developing and evaluating a new clinical program, 2) designing and presenting a series of teaching modules, 3) writing and evaluating practice guidelines or policy and procedure manual for a new practice setting, 4) preparing a journal article for publication, 5) expanding the semester 2 directed independent study project from a single case into a case series analysis, or 6) other individualized pediatrics-related options A soft-bound technical report of the project is submitted in addition to an electronic version. All capstone project methods and results are presented verbally to colleagues and other related professionals in practice settings where the project was conducted. *(This online course may be taken in an additional 4th semester, on permission of the Program Director.)*

P 744 Pediatric Differential Diagnosis (2 credits)
This course is designed to enhance the skill level of physical therapists working with children in conducting selected portions of an examination. This examination process includes taking a history for the pediatric client, reviewing systems beyond the system(s)

typically of concern to therapists, addressing health promotion with children and families, and recognizing signs and symptoms that indicate the need for a referral to another health practitioner. The student is expected to bring knowledge of tests and measures and examination procedures unique to pediatric physical therapy.