



## **Hippotherapy vs. Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding**

### **Hippotherapy**—*a service offered by Children's TherAplay*

- One-on-one physical, occupational, or speech therapy, prescribed by a physician and delivered by a licensed therapist in conjunction with a horse handler and a specially-screened and -trained therapy horse.
- The goal is for professional treatment to improve neurological functioning in cognition, body movement, organization, and attention levels. The focus is on achieving individual therapeutic goals like sitting up, walking, being able to go up and down steps, or dress and undress independently.
- A medical plan of care is established for each patient and progress is periodically reassessed to determine the need for ongoing services. Treatment, depending upon the facility, generally occurs year-round until the client meets discharge criteria.
- Because the horse's movement is essential to assist in meeting therapy goals, horses are specifically selected for their temperament, size, and the type of movement they provide for the client.
- There is direct hands-on participation by the therapist at all times. The treating therapist continually assesses and modifies therapy based on the client's responses.
- Equine-assisted physical, occupational, or speech therapy is reimbursable by most medical insurance carriers.

### **Therapeutic / Adaptive Riding**—*a service **not** offered by Children's TherAplay*

- Recreational horseback riding lessons adapted for individuals with special needs.
- Completed by a professional horseback riding instructor in conjunction with volunteers.
- Many people participate in therapeutic/adaptive riding as a recreational activity or for confidence-building. The emphasis is on horsemanship, proper riding position, and rein skills, not functional therapeutic goals.
- Riding skills are generally taught on a group basis with the instructor responding to the group as a whole in addition to fostering individual success.
- This activity, depending upon the facility, generally runs in eight- to twelve-week "sessions."
- Horses are selected based on temperament rather than quality of movement.
- There is occasional hands-on assistance by the riding instructor and/or volunteers, but the instructor usually teaches from the center of the arena.
- As an adaptive/recreational sport or activity, not therapy, it is not covered by insurance.