

Table 14-2

**Types of Environmental Modifications****Changes to the Physical Environment**

- Modify the layout (remove a door to make the opening wider)
- Provide adaptive equipment (a tub bench)
- Architectural modifications (provide a ramp, bathroom modifications)

**Modification of the Occupation**

- Education about how to use the environment in a different way (always turn on lights before entering a room for an individual who has low vision)
- Use everyday items to achieve goals (use of a portable phone for safety)

**Supports From People**

- Caregiver education (proper transfer techniques, how to use a lift)
- Engage social services (home delivered meals)

used items within reach would be a modification that would fit in this category. Rearranging furniture to allow space for an individual's wheelchair is another example. A second strategy commonly used by occupational therapists is the provision of specialized adaptive equipment or durable medical equipment. Examples of these types of modifications can include providing a tub bench and handheld shower for someone who is unable to transfer into a bathtub to take a bath. A third example of change to the physical environment is the provision of architectural modifications. These can include simple modifications, such as adding rails to stairs or adding grab bars in the bathroom to assist in transfers to the toilet. More complicated architectural modifications can include the provision of ramps to enter the home or major remodeling of a home. More involved changes can include providing a roll-in shower where there was previously a bathtub, adding an elevator or providing an accessible addition that includes a bedroom and bathroom for a member of the family. Depending on their knowledge and experience, occupational therapists may request assistance in determining the best architectural modification for the client. In this case, the occupational therapist would bring an understanding of the occupational goal and the ability of the client and work together with a building professional to determine the best modification for the situation.

***Modifying the Occupation***

The next major category, modifying how one performs an activity, includes providing education about safety in the home and task modification. For example, instructing someone with low vision to turn on lights before going up and down stairs or reminding them to take their portable phone with them when they go to the basement to do laundry would fit in this category. Individuals are instructed to use their existing environments in ways that make it safer or easier for them to achieve their occupational performance goals. An additional strategy that can be used in this category is teaching individuals who have disabilities how to use everyday items to achieve their goals. For example, teaching an individual who has fine motor problems how to use a large button, universal remote control for the television may give him independence in pursuing his leisure interest of watching television.