

Pediatric Feeding Disorders Program





About the Pediatric Feeding Disorders Program

We are proud to announce the expansion of our comprehensive feeding program. The Pediatric Feeding Disorders Program at Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH) will continue to serve infants, children and adolescents with moderate to severe feeding problems.

Our new program is for infants, children and adolescents who have not made progress in outpatient feeding therapy at CSH or elsewhere. This program uses a goal-oriented and scientifically supported approach based on the principles and procedures of applied behavior analysis (ABA). The child's team observes and measures child and caregiver behavior and makes data-based decisions. The approach is highly successful. Children in programs that use this approach meet 90% of their treatment goals.

The child and family participate in a continuum of services. The day-treatment program helps caregivers make a big change in the child's feeding behavior. Once the day-treatment program ends, the child and family will remain with their same feeding team for the outpatient follow up program. The goal of the service continuum is for the child to eat like other children. Caregivers play a critical role as members of the treatment team. The program's success depends on caregiver participation.

You should contact the Pediatric Feeding Disorders Program if your child has had at least 3 months of outpatient feeding therapy and:

- Doesn't eat many different foods
- Gets most calories from tube feedings
- Has mealtime behavior that causes you stress
- Has oral-motor-skill deficits
- Is not eating like other children
- Is not growing well

If your child has not had at least 3 months of outpatient therapy, you can contact the Pediatric Feeding Disorders Program if your child:

- Has a naso-gastric tube and the amount he or she eats or drinks has not increased for at least 3 months
- Has been hospitalized for dehydration two or more times in the past 2 months
- Is losing weight

Service Continuum

The goal of the service continuum is for the child to eat like other children.

Evaluation Clinic: The purpose is to determine whether the child and family are appropriate for the program.

Day-treatment Program: The purpose is to help caregivers make a big change in the child's feeding behavior.

Outpatient Program: The purpose is to make sure the child's feeding behavior improves after the child and family finish the day-treatment program.

What to expect

Evaluation Clinic:

Before the evaluation, the caregiver must (a) get a referral from the child's doctor, (b) fill out a screening form, (c) write down what the child eats and drinks for 3 days, (d) get the child's medical records, and (e) send these items to the intake coordinator. During the evaluation, the team will watch you and your child during a meal. The team will ask you some questions. The team will talk to you about what your family needs to do if your child is in the program.

Day-treatment Program:

Caregiver participation is required. The child will come to the clinic all day, Monday through Friday, for approximately 8 weeks. A team will work with the child and caregiver. The team will assess why the child has a feeding disorder. The team will use that information to develop a treatment. The team will train caregivers to do the treatment in the clinic. The team will go to the home for about a week to make sure the treatment works for the caregivers in the home. The child graduates from the day-treatment program when (a) the child meets the treatment goals, (b) caregivers are trained, and (c) the team has done the home visits.

Outpatient Program:

The program starts right after the child finishes the day-treatment program. The appointments are once or twice a week for 30 minutes to 1 hour. The therapist will watch the caregiver feed the child. The therapist will give the caregiver homework. The homework will include feeding the child in a certain way and keeping records on the child's feeding behavior. We typically do outpatient appointments via telehealth. The child and family participate in the outpatient program until the child is an age- or developmentally typical feeder. The outpatient program is about 2 to 3 years.



There are a variety of departments and programs at Children's Specialized Hospital, including:

- Autism Program
- Brain & Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation
- Chronic Pain & Chronic Illness Management
- Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (Physiatry)
- Physical Therapy
- Psychiatry
- Psychology
- Recreational & Child Life Therapy
- Severe Behavior Disorders Program
- Special Needs Primary Care
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Psychology



Referrals and Appointments

For more information or to make an appointment call **888-244-5373** or visit rwjbh.org/feedingdisorders.



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