

The **Feeding and Swallowing Program** at The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh provides outpatient evaluation and treatment for children with mild to severe feeding concerns from birth through 21 years of age.

Our Philosophy

By using a positive treatment approach, children learn to become active eaters. As therapists, we need to respect that a child has the right to refuse to eat. Our job is to build trust, develop skills, establish routine, and find a therapeutic method in which the child is motivated to eat what we're offering them. Our therapy uses positive reinforcement, building skills and honoring the child's learning style and pace to work toward an age-appropriate diet and more positive experience with food.

Who Can Benefit?

Our program addresses different types of feeding-related challenges. Treatment can help children who exhibit symptoms such as:

- Delays in oral motor skills, such as being able to drink from a bottle or chew
- Restricted eating due to sensory, motor, or experiential issues, such as acute illnesses or choking episodes
- Feeding disorders associated with medical conditions, developmental disorders, or genetic syndromes
- Swallowing disorders
- Significant social or behavioral challenges that impact eating
- Transitioning from IV or tube feeding to eating by mouth
- Delays in increasing variety and volume of foods



How Can Our Expert Team Help?

Our team of speech language pathologists and occupational therapists teach families the techniques and skills to help manage their child's eating. Families are encouraged to actively participate in therapy sessions and are instructed on how to carry over treatment programs in the home. Our team may also collaborate with other experts - behavioral health therapists, school therapists, teachers, nurses, and early intervention experts - to ensure success.

A Plan to Fit Needs and Achieve Goals

An individualized treatment plan is established based on the child's needs and goals, such as:

- Gain weight and grow
- Accept food and drinks by mouth
- Increase variety, volume, and textures of foods
- Learn to chew and manage a bite of food
- Improve swallow safety
- Drink from a bottle or cup
- Acquire or improve self-feeding skills
- Decrease or eliminate tube feedings/TPN
- Decrease mealtime stress, anxiety, and negative behaviors and increase mealtime enjoyment

To learn more or schedule an appointment, please call 412.420.2362.