

# Functional Feeding Program

at The Children's Institute



## Purpose:

When infants and children are unable to eat due to physical or behavioral conditions, serious health problems can result. The Children's Institute's Functional Feeding Program provides evaluation and treatment, on an inpatient and outpatient basis, for children with feeding difficulties. The Functional Feeding team also provides specialized services for infants with feeding concerns through the Functional Feeding Clinic.





## Who Can Benefit:

The Children's Institute's Functional Feeding Program addresses different types of feeding-related problems. Treatment can help children who:

- don't like to eat as a result of a medical condition
- avoid eating as a learned behavior
- don't eat enough food by mouth and, as a result, must continue with tube feeding
- do not progress to eating foods of various textures and food groups

## How The Functional Feeding Team Can Help:

The Functional Feeding team includes clinicians with expertise in feeding disorders. Members of the team can include the following:

- pediatrician
- speech/language pathologist
- clinical dietician
- occupational therapist
- behavioral psychologist
- therapeutic feeding specialist



This team provides help for children through a feeding clinic for infants, an outpatient clinic, outpatient evaluation and treatment and inpatient care. The treatment team can design and implement a treatment plan for children who have not responded to other treatment programs.

The Functional Feeding team provides support by teaching families a variety of techniques and skills to help them manage their child's feeding program. This support continues through discharge planning, outpatient consultation and follow-up care. The family and the caregivers are very important members of the Functional Feeding team. The team of clinicians will provide support by teaching families a variety of techniques and skills to help them manage their child's feeding program in the home and community. Families will also be expected to carry over personalized feeding home programs and participate in their child's therapy sessions. The team members can also collaborate with their child's support services, including school therapists, teachers, early intervention and/or wrap around.

**The Functional Feeding team includes various clinicians with expertise in feeding disorders.**





## Potential Goals:

Members of the Functional Feeding team establish individualized goals for each child receiving treatment. As a result of the therapy, the team may look for the child to:

- increase the variety and volume of foods she eats
- feed himself
- drink from a cup
- be comfortable with a structured mealtime
- tolerate an oral diet
- chew foods
- gain weight and grow
- no longer need tube feedings
- tolerate different food textures
- become less sensitive to oral, facial and touch stimulation
- recognize appropriate sleep and hunger cycles
- not avoid mealtime and to be less disruptive during meals
- respond more appropriately to sensory input
- transfer the newly learned eating skills to settings outside

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## Functional Feeding Treatment Options:

### Outpatient Treatment

Outpatient feeding treatments are provided at The Children's Institute's Squirrel Hill location and its satellites in Green Tree, Monroeville and Wexford. The child typically will receive treatment on a weekly basis. The frequency of treatment can vary, depending on the family's needs. For children needing behavioral services as part of their treatment program, treatment is provided at the Squirrel Hill location.

### Inpatient Treatment

If the Functional Feeding team believes the child would be best served by daily care and intense medical management, the child will be admitted to the Functional Feeding inpatient unit at The Children's Institute in Squirrel Hill. The child will receive treatment on a daily basis that will include three or four therapeutic meals provided by specially trained staff. In addition, family members receive intensive training to help them carry over to home the individualized Functional Feeding protocol established for the child.





### **Functional Feeding Clinic**

Children less than 1 year of age with feeding challenges can undergo assessment and receive treatment through the Functional Feeding Clinic. Infants are evaluated and treated, if necessary, for feeding and nutritional concerns. Based on results of the initial clinic visit, children may be referred for ongoing treatment or may be recommended for ongoing monitoring via periodic return clinic visits.

### **Consultation Treatment**

The Children's Institute offers consultative treatment for children with feeding challenges. Treatment is provided in collaboration with a therapist in the family's area of residence. Children are typically seen by the Functional Feeding team on a monthly basis.





## To Learn More:

For more information on the evaluation process and treatment options offered through the Functional Feeding Program at The Children's Institute, please visit the website at [www.amazingkids.org](http://www.amazingkids.org) or call 412-420-2362.