

# Feeding and Swallowing Therapy

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Feeding and swallowing therapy helps children learn skills to eat and drink safely. Your child's therapist will make a plan that is right for you and your child.

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## What is feeding and swallowing therapy?

There are different types of feeding therapy depending on what your child needs help with. For example:

- Feeding therapy may help your child learn to bite and chew foods, drink from a cup or accept a variety of different foods.
- Your child's therapist may also monitor and address your child's swallowing safety.

Therapy usually includes caregiver education to help you work with your child at home.

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## Who provides feeding and swallowing therapy?

Feeding and swallowing therapy is provided by a speech-language pathologist (SLP), occupational therapist (OT), physical therapist (PT) or behavioral mental health provider who has expertise in feeding and swallowing problems. Often, a team approach helps provide the best care for your child. Therapy may be provided in your home or at a clinic.

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## Where can my child get feeding and swallowing therapy?

We have limited options for feeding and swallowing therapy at Seattle Children's Hospital and the available services may not meet your child's needs. However, we would like to help you find other outside resources to support your child.

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## Here are some options to help you find feeding and swallowing therapy.

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### If your child is under 3 years of age

Contact the Washington State Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program (ESIT), also known as "Early Intervention" or "Birth to Three." Children under age 3 are eligible for a developmental evaluation. For more information, call 1-800-322-2588 or visit [dcyf.wa.gov/services/child-development-supports/esit/early-intervention-services](http://dcyf.wa.gov/services/child-development-supports/esit/early-intervention-services). Say you are interested in feeding and swallowing therapy.

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### For children of all ages

- Visit the Pediatric Feeding Association at [pedsfeeds.com](http://pedsfeeds.com) and choose the option "Find a Provider" to search for feeding therapists in your community.
  - Search online for "pediatric feeding and swallowing therapy" in your community and surrounding area. Contact the clinic to confirm they provide feeding and swallowing therapy for children.
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### To Learn More

- Speech and Language  
206-987-2104
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



### **If your child's feeding and swallowing was evaluated at Seattle Children's Hospital**

Contact the therapist directly or call Speech and Language Services at 206-987-2104 to request a list of therapy providers from your child's evaluating therapist. You can also call us to have evaluation notes sent to your child's feeding therapist.

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### **Is feeding and swallowing therapy covered by insurance?**

This depends on your insurance carrier and the feeding therapy provider. Contact your child's insurance and ask for the details of your therapy benefits. You can also ask for a list of "in-network" clinics and providers in your community. Once you choose a therapy provider, call to confirm they accept your child's insurance.

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### **How do I get started?**

Contact your child's primary care physician (pediatrician) and have them send a referral for feeding therapy to the provider/clinic you have chosen.