Parents and other caregivers are provided with formal training to implement an effective mealtime plan. Family meals may be conducted with parents and their child, and caregivers are encouraged to observe therapy sessions on a daily basis. The interdisciplinary team at the end of a child's admission to the inpatient unit will discuss patient progress and prepare for the transition into the home, community and education. The team includes Board-Certified Behavior Analysts, Developmental Playroom Specialists, and Behavior Data Specialists.

The Feeding Disorders Program treats children and adolescents who, collectively, have a variety of diagnoses. The majority of patients treated in the Feeding Disorders Program have feeding challenges along with other disorders or concerns, such as autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome or premature birth. Previous patient diagnoses include, but are not limited to: feeding issues, gastrointestinal issues, oral-motor dysfunction, feeding refusal, behavioral disorders and food allergies.

Patients with feeding issues may have complex needs. Most patients receive treatment from a multidisciplinary team of pediatric gastroenterologists, nurse practitioners, nurses, dietitians, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, patient and family advocates, and social workers. Nursing staff is certified in the care of children with feeding disorders.

Kennedy Krieger Institute is committed to providing person and family-focused services. Patients and their families are encouraged to participate in a discharge meeting with the interdisciplinary team. They are provided with education and training sessions and support to ensure the best possible treatment outcomes. Parents participate in a steering meeting at the beginning of a year and a discharge meeting with the interdisciplinary team at the end of a child's admission to the inpatient unit.

The majority of patients treated in the Feeding Disorders Program receive bowel management therapy with behavioral psychology, speech and language and occupational therapy. Other therapies include inpatient treatment, outpatient treatment, and feeding therapy on an as-needed basis.

How much therapy do patients receive while being treated in the Feeding Disorders Program? While treatment plans vary by patient, each patient generally receives bowel management therapy with behavioral psychology, speech and language and occupational therapy. What kinds of improvements might patients expect? Patients may participate in structured, supervised play in one of the two playrooms which are open for six hours Monday through Friday. The Inpatient Program is designed for children who have severe feeding difficulties that require more intensive medical care. The ambulatory and Telefeeding Program is designed for children who are unable to receive care at the hospital or who need less intensive medical care, such as those with medical supervision, or feedings at home.

Patients from all over the world seek treatment at Kennedy Krieger Institute. Kennedy Krieger has treated patients from 35 states and 10 other countries including Amsterdam, Germany, Brazil, Panama and Saudi Arabia. In scal year 2022*, no patients in the Feeding Disorders Program were discharged to acute care. Occasionally, these more intensive medical needs require unplanned transfers to inpatient rehab. If a medical emergency occurs, Kennedy Krieger has on-site 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week certified staff to respond to medical emergencies.

Where do patients live who are treated in the Feeding Disorders Program? Since 2010, we have treated patients from 35 states and 10 other countries including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Middle East, the United Kingdom, Venezuela, and the United States. The majority of patients treated in the Feeding Disorders Program live in the U.S. and Canada. The Feeding Disorders Program at Kennedy Krieger Institute is recognized by both the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and The Joint Commission. Does Kennedy Krieger have special accreditation? Yes, Kennedy Krieger specializes in feeding disorders and is an accredited specialist facility.

The majority of patients treated in the Feeding Disorders Program at Kennedy Krieger have feeding disorders. Other conditions that require specialized treatment may include autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, food allergies, reux disease, failure to thrive, and other feeding challenges.

In scal year 2022*, 100% of tube-fed patients were weaned from their feeding tube by discharge. 97% of families reported general satisfaction with the treatment outcomes. 96% of families reported that they were able to get their child to eat a wider variety of foods. 81% of tube-fed patients were weaned from their feeding tube by discharge. 88% of families reported that their child’s food variety met or exceeded their goals by discharge. 96% of families reported that their child was able to self-feed by discharge. 81% of patients reported that they were able to feed their child independently by discharge. 81% of patients reported that they were able to feed their child independently by discharge. 81% of patients reported that they were able to feed their child independently by discharge. 81% of patients reported that they were able to feed their child independently by discharge.