

PHILOSOPHICAL TREATMENT APPROACHES

ft. Alan Silverman, PhD



feeding matters

*Conquering pediatric feeding struggles
to nourish healthy futures*

navigating the system

It is common to have a team of 3-4 providers who work closely to help you and your child. You should first have a thorough discussion with your pediatrician. Sometimes, they may even specialize in gastroenterology, developmental issues, or rehabilitation. This discussion will help the both of you decide which sub-specialists may have an important part of your child's feeding team.

building the team

It is important to work with a collaborative team because feeding is often complex and every child's struggle is different. You may work with an Occupation Therapist on sensory based and adaptive technologies, a Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) on assessments around oral skills, and a Psychologist on identifying what behaviors are becoming barriers to your child's growth and nutrition. This is just one example of how a full team can help find the right set of strategies to help your child begin to eat normally.

This team of providers will all assess and treat feeding struggles through a slightly different lens. This will allow them to recommend what set of interventions will work for your child's specific skills and needs. This might lead to medications to enhance certain appetite, imagining to look into the anatomy of the feeding struggle, or further medical procedures to resolve underlying problems.

intervention strategies

Sensory strategies are a common first route for most children. It plays a strong role in many feeding struggles. Currently, sensory based interventions are not well understood but that doesn't mean that they are not effective. Another route is working with an SLP on a child's chewing and swallowing skills along with oral sensation. At the same time, you might be identifying behavioral reactions to feeding struggles and working on positive strategies that may enhance your child's positive experiences with eating with a Psychiatrist.

Feeding struggles are very complex and widely variable. There is no one solution – best care is through a collaborative approach with all providers assessing, discussing, and creating a treatment plan together. In addition, you as the parent have a key role in this team as you will be carrying out most of the treatment at home. Make sure that the treatment makes sense to you and that you are comfortable with the strategy.

length of the process

There is no common answer to how long your treatment strategy may take. Similar to feeding struggles, treatment is widely varied. You are beginning a critical process – and every process takes time. You providers need to complete an assessment to help identify the struggle and then provide you with strategies that you are confident in. There will be changes in your child's skills and behaviors as they begin to advance in their feeding. Rather than ask how long the treatment process will take, instead ask “what is the end goal?” There is just not one simple solution.