**For Immediate Release**

**The Journal of Pediatrics Publishes Promising Results & Potential from
The Infant and Child Feeding Questionnaire Study**

***A clinical screening tool that may lead to earlier identification and treatment of Pediatric Feeding Disorder***

 **PHOENIX, Ariz. (June 17, 2020)** – According to a seminal study now published in [The Journal of Pediatrics](https://www.jpeds.com/), pediatricians, parents and caregivers of children with Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD) may soon benefit from a clinical child well-visit screening tool in the form of a simple age specific [Infant Child Feeding Questionnaire©](http://questionnaire.feedingmatters.org/questionnaire) (ICFQ) that identifies and differentiates between children who are struggling with feeding from those who may be picky eaters.

The study was funded, coordinated, and facilitated by [Feeding Matters](http://www.feedingmatters.org/), the first organization in the world dedicated to advancing the system of care for children with PFD. The research was conducted by co-principal investigators, Dr. Alan Silverman and Dr. Julie Barkmeier-Kraemer to expand on a previous pilot study with a goal to develop a screening tool to earlier identify children with PFD.  Silverman and colleagues collected data from 989 caregivers, over three years, from University of Utah and Medical College of Wisconsin-based clinics. Participants’ children were male and female aged between birth and 4 years, who met ICD-9 criteria for Feeding Difficulties as evidenced by feeding aversion, difficulty feeding, developmental delay in feeding, and extreme selectivity.

Infants and children with pediatric feeding disorder experience difficulties eating, drinking, or digesting, which can result in the inability to get proper nutrition. Often undiagnosed for months or even years, pediatric feeding disorder can affect a child’s growth, development, health and well-being. Current estimates of PFD prevalence range from 2% to 29% of American children (i.e. 478,000-8.7 million) and account for 3% of pediatric hospital admissions in the United States, making PFD one of the most common and costly conditions of childhood.

A screening tool to earlier identify children with PFD would lead to specialist referrals. Earlier interventions could mean more treatment options before the problems escalate, decreased possibility of developmental delays and reduced parental stress and anxiety over feeding their children.

Although primary care providers are best positioned to identify children with PFD, until now they have lacked the tools and adequate well-visit examination time to reliably distinguish PFD from minor feeding concerns. Complicating the matter, parents often face many barriers including; a lack of evidence-based data, the diverse and often misunderstood or underserved nature of PFD, grief and pressure when they cannot feed their child and therefore struggle to know how to talk to their pediatrician about these problems.

“This work shows that a 6-item screening tool accurately identifies children who have Pediatric Feeding Disorders,” said Silverman. “Wide spread screening at well-child visits have the potential to help affected families quickly identify the problem and get the critical support they need.”

The ICFQ functions as a great conversation piece between families and pediatricians and now shows promise to be a screening instrument that can support the medical field in their ability to earlier identify and prevent severe long-term health outcomes when PFD goes undiagnosed.

“The ICFQ provides a wonderful opportunity for a family to work with their pediatrician to identify a potential issue at the onset, rather than taking a ‘wait and see’ approach. ‘Wait and see’ feels like an eternity to that parent who is trying desperately to nourish their child,” said Jaclyn Pederson,Interim Chief Executive Officer, Feeding Matters. “If we wait too long, the negative consequences for both the family and child can be detrimental.”

The complete manuscript, “**Psychometric Properties of the Infant and Child Feeding Questionnaire**” is available online at [www.jpeds.com](http://www.jpeds.com).  See the paper for a full list of authors and disclosures. Doi:10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.04.040.

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**About Feeding Matters**

For kids with pediatric feeding disorder (PFD), every bite of food can be painful, scary, or simply impossible to swallow, potentially impeding nutrition, development, growth, and overall well-being. Yet, there is no functional system of care for PFD locally, nationally, or internationally. That’s why Feeding Matters is dedicated to creating a world where children with pediatric feeding disorder thrive. Established in 2006, Feeding Matters is the first organization in the world uniting the concerns of families with the field’s leading advocates, experts, and allied healthcare professionals to ignite unprecedented change to the system of care through advocacy, education, support, and research – including a stand-alone diagnosis, the International Pediatric Feeding Disorder Conference, and the Infant and Child Feeding Questionnaire. In 2019, Feeding Matters reached more than 140,000 individuals in 50 states and 143 countries through their programs and website. To learn more about pediatric feeding disorder, visit [feedingmatters.org](http://www.feedingmatters.org) or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube at [@FeedingMatters](http://www.twitter.com/feedingmatters).

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