



Feeding is one of the most important activities that children engage in, and yet for some children it can be one of the most challenging.

Whatever your child's age and diagnosis Jennifer is able to provide highly skilled feeding therapy and parent support to help you and your child have a more positive mealtime experience! Below are common problems experienced during the different ages and stages of childhood:

Infants - Even the littlest feeders may benefit from feeding therapy! Are breast and bottle feedings uncomfortable, taking too long, or just not seeming the way they should be? Is feeding your baby a source of stress and frustration? An occupational therapy evaluation can assess what may be contributing to difficulties and develop a treatment plan to help. It is important to address any concerns early on to get feeding off to a good start.

Babies - Are mealtimes dreaded in your home? Is your baby's head turned and mouth closed anytime you bring out the spoon? Is there more food on the floor than in your baby's mouth? Does your baby gag, cough, or choke? Mealtime is supposed to be an enjoyable. Feeding your baby is supposed to be easy. Right?! Sometimes feeding and mealtimes aren't going the way they should be. Those first mealtimes should be a time of playful exploration, enjoyment, and confidence.

A current feeding trend is Baby-Led weaning. Consultations are available to assist in determining if your baby is ready. Baby-led weaning is an approach that encourages weaning directly from the breast or bottle to table foods. It is important to consider your child's readiness so that your child has a safe and positive experience.

Toddlers - Did your once adventurous feeder suddenly start to refuse every food you offer? Are you cooking the same meal over and over? Has your toddler gotten stuck on purees and soft foods and hasn't gone on to eat table food like you thought? It can be normal for toddlers to become pickier, but in some instances it can be a sign of a problem. There may be reasons, other than just being difficult, for picky feeding or failing to progress to more complex food textures. These reasons may have gone undetected and be impacting your child.

Children - Feeding difficulties can persist or worsen as children get older. Maybe you needed to take a break from therapy and are thinking about trying again. There are many reasons for picky eating. Autism, Down's Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, a history of reflux, GI, prematurity, low muscle tone, sensory processing difficulties, coordination difficulties, all of these can relate to picky eating. It is never too late to work on feeding!

Tweens and Teenagers - Older children and teens, especially those with special needs, may continue to experience feeding difficulties. Children with complex diagnoses such as Autism have added difficulties that impact mealtime participation due to communication difficulties, social difficulties, and delays in the activities of daily living related to mealtime. Regardless of present age, it is important to have healthy eating habits and more independence in the activities related to mealtime.

Complex Feeding Difficulties - some children are impacted by significant feeding challenges. These difficulties may have resulted in a diagnosis of Failure To Thrive or G-tube placement. Jennifer has worked with children of all ages with complex feeding histories and diagnoses. She has the experience to provide a thorough evaluation, assess the need for further evaluation by medical specialists, and develop an effective treatment plan to help support progress in feeding.

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Call to schedule an appointment: (760) 207-7934
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GROW is our motto - **G**aining skills, **R**eaching potential, **O**ne team, for the **W**hole child

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