

Helping Kids



Health Care & the Skills of Living for Children

Personal Message Parents Helping Kids Understanding what Pediatric Therapy can do for your child?

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When a Pediatric Therapist treats a child, they create a change that benefits not only the child, but also the family. Pediatric Therapy is therapy specifically directed towards the needs of children. Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists all work with children to help them reach or regain their maximum potential for independence. This is done through direct therapy hands-on techniques and by working with parents, families, teachers and doctors to create a supportive environment for development in all areas.

Children gain strength at specific muscle groups to participate in play activities and to express themselves so that they are understood. With pediatric therapy, children gain skills to organize and coordinate their movements and sensory input so that they are able to play and speak the way they want to and eat.

Parents gain a better understanding of their child's strengths and needs, and learn ways to help their child while using real life activities.

Parents state that the ideas they learn and use every day at home allow them to feel that they have a positive impact on their child's growth. These ideas are customized for each family, allowing



Carmen Pagan, Misty Standard and Jennifer Griffith —founding partners, Milestones

children with injuries or disabilities to be a part of the daily activities and routines followed by the entire family.

The Pediatric Therapist will recommend special equipment including bracing, communication aids and toys to promote improved function and development.

Pediatric therapists can be found in many areas including clinics, hospitals and schools. They provide many specialized programs that may include aquatics, hippotherapy and intensive therapy camps in addition to individual therapy sessions.

Pediatric therapists treat the whole child as a child within a family unit....

Pediatric therapists are familiar with the needs and developmental expectations of all ages, diagnoses and abilities. Pediatric therapists treat the whole child as a child within a family unit; not just as a smaller version of an adult.

A Physical, Occupational or Speech Therapist can assist a parent with preparing their child to meet future challenges and needs. Let a Pediatric Therapist help you help your child today!

Is Your Child Developing Normally?



As a parent we worry if our child is developing within normal limits. There is a wide range of normal. How do you know if your child is developing normally? Do you sometimes wonder if something is wrong with your child?



Is the child developing like their siblings or cousins? Do you wonder why your infant doesn't like to be on their stomach or has an odd shaped head? Do you wonder when your toddler will ever say a sound or why they don't eat different textures of food? Do you wonder why your

four year old still walks on his toes or doesn't like to play rough? Does your child feel stiff or floppy? Is he weak on one side? Wouldn't it be nice to have the answers to these questions and have your mind put at ease?

In the following paragraphs you will learn some guidelines for normal childhood development. The first person to ask questions on your child's development is the child's pediatrician or a pediatric physical, occupational, or speech therapist. Don't "wait and see" if they grow out of the problem, ask questions.

By 3 Months

- Bears weight on both legs.
- Pushes up on forearms while on tummy.
- Lifts and turns head side to side on tummy.
- Beginning to roll side to side.

- Looks at hands.
- Holds a rattle.
- Follows moving object with eyes.
- Cries, but often soothed.
- Makes sounds-vowels .
- Jumps or blinks to loud sounds.
- Smiles.
- Tolerates time on the tummy
- Use a strong coordinated suck

By 6 Months

- Rolls from back to stomach (7 months).
- Sits with support.
- Holds head straight.
- Beginning to belly crawl.
- Beginning to sit without support.
- Passes objects from hand to hand.
- Puts toys in mouth.
- Reaches for and grasps objects
- Babbling-constants and vowels.
- Turns head towards sound.
- Makes eye contact.
- Bangs objects (7 months).
- Eats more solid food and begins drinking from a cup

By 12 Months

- Crawls on all fours (9 months).
- Pulls to stand (9 months).
- Cruises the furniture (10 months).
- Walks 5 steps (flat foot).
- Stands free.
- Tries to feed self.
- Plays patty-cake and peek-a-boo.
- Responds to "no".
- May say one to two words.
- Identifies familiar pictures in a book, Ex. Dog,

Do you wonder why your four year old still walks on his toes or doesn't like to play rough? Do you wonder why your child may not be gaining weight?

baby.
Eats a variety of chopped foods

By 18 Months

Walks without help.
Crawls up stairs.
Creeps up stairs (14 months).
Holds objects in both hands.
Stacks 2-3 cubes.
Uses pincher grasp.
Scribbles with a crayon.
Open and closes cupboards.
Stacks 2-3 cubes
Follows simple directions with cues.
Uses 15 – 20 words
Labels common objects, ex. Ball.
Feed themselves with fingers and spoon
Eats harder foods such as cookies

If you suspect your child has a delay in their development ask your pediatrician to be referred to a pediatric therapist for an evaluation or call your local pediatric therapist today. In the following paragraphs you will learn what the different types of pediatric therapists are and what they can do for your child.

A pediatric physical therapist works on strengthening and stretching muscles to achieve skills such as sitting, crawling, kneeling, walking, running, and jumping. These are known as gross motor skills. A child may have a delay in these skills or may have lost these skills from an injury or illness. They may work with children on land or in the water for aquatic therapy. A pediatric physical therapist may also order equipment such as braces, walkers, crutches, strollers and wheelchairs that will help children to achieve independence. Also, they work on the skills needed for walking, like balance. A pediatric physical therapist helps children gain independence by reaching their maximum potential.

A pediatric Occupational Therapist (OT) works on strengthening of muscles and on positioning to help such skills as sitting, grasping, holding and pinching. These are both gross and fine motor skills. They also work on skills for eating and dressing as well as visual skills needed for learning and doing. A child seen by a pediatric OT may have a delay from birth or from an illness or accident. Pediatric OT's work with children who have difficulty taking in information from

Tips and Tricks

1. Lip closure? Articulation problems are often times a result of poor mouth musculature. Have your child play with different types of whistles to ensure that they are developing their oral musculature.

2. Don't let kids play with their food? Go ahead!!! Give your child a straw and some yogurt let them develop a strong suck and have them eat yogurt or even pudding through a straw. This is great to develop oral motor skills.

3. Puzzles? Have your child start with one piece puzzles. These puzzles often come with pegs on the pieces. This is great to develop a pinch mechanism that will be used later in life to hold a pencil. Puzzles also develop motor planning and object manipulation skills.

4. Playdough? Have your children squeeze it through their fingers; roll it into balls; and use utensils to cut playdough. Use your feet as well! Roll them with your feet, make a foot print, squeeze it with your toes!!! This develops strength, fine motor skills and object manipulation skills.

5. Swings? Swings and other moving toys are so important. They are not just fun!!! They work on tummy strength to stay in a sitting upright position, provide important information to a portion of the brain. Swings also work on motor planning to help both sides of the body work together to propel the swing

6. Balls, Balls, Balls!!! Throwing and catching works on motor planning and hand eye coordination. Kicking not only enhances strength and coordination but it also develops balance skills!!! Think about it, you have to stand on one foot in order to kick a ball.



their environment and processing it for use (Sensory Integrative Dysfunction) or sensory processing disorder. OT's may also help make recommendations for new wheelchairs or other special and adaptive equipment. They may also help to make or order braces or splints to stretch or position the hands in a better way. A pediatric OT assists children to gain independence through exercise, functional activities and play.

A pediatric Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) works with children who are delayed in their communication or swallowing skills from birth or from an illness or injury. They may also work on oral motor skills and articulation of sounds. A pediatric (SLP) also

works with children who are nonverbal by use of various equipment to help them to access the world through communication and become more independent. Finally, a pediatric SLP assists children who have difficulty with swallowing by strengthening the muscles necessary for swallowing so that they can eat safely.

In general a pediatric therapist helps children achieve their full potential. The therapists along with the parents help the children become as independent as possible with a lot of hard work in therapy and in their home program. All children should have the opportunity to reach their maximum potential.

FAQ

- Frequently Asked Questions About Pediatric Therapy

1. Does my child have Attention Deficit Disorder?

Lack of attention can be seen as a symptom of a problem, not the whole problem. An Occupational Therapist will assess if a child is having problems with how their eyes and hands work together. They will also evaluate whether they have problems with their ability to tackle a task, break it down into simple steps and follow through to completion. This can often be the cause of decreased attention. If a child is unable to perform one part of the motor plan their attention to that task will significantly decrease. Ask an Occupational Therapist for an evaluation and help your child to succeed today!

2. What is the usual prognosis for children with difficulty in organizing and producing speech?

The outcomes will vary with each individual child and the severity of the child's difficulty or apraxia. The following factors contribute to prognosis:

- family participation and involvement and follow-through at home
- how therapy is tailored to the child's unique case
- the presence of other speech/language or medical issues
- the individual characteristics of each child; i.e: receptive language, cognitive ability, desire to communicate, attention span and the age that treatment is begun.

3. When will my child walk?

Look at what the child is currently doing and identify the other skills that need to be achieved in order for walking to occur. For example, if your child is pulling to stand, he must cruise along and between furniture next. Then you could encourage walking with a push toy. He will probably begin to walk independently from there. Each small skill in this process should be celebrated. Therapist, parent and child must work together to close the gap to their peers.

3. Why is it important for an infant to be on their belly? The doctor said sleeping on the belly could cause SIDS.

Encourage your child to play on their belly. They do not need to sleep on their belly. Play on their belly strengthens their neck and trunk extension and increases their endurance for activity. The child will first prop on his elbows; then move up to extended arms; then begin to weightshift and reach to play with toys. This will help with their future sitting balance. Weightbearing through the hands first stretches out the hand muscles to get these muscles ready for the child to use for small motor skills like putting balls into a bowl. Eventually, the quality of the hands muscles will determine the quality of handwriting. All of these pieces of development build on the next making each step important.

CALL YOUR PEDIATRIC THERAPIST IF YOUR CHILD: Take this simple test...

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your child hop forward 6 inches on 1 foot?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your child catch a large ball from 5 feet with their hands only?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your child hop 8 consecutive times on each foot?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your child cut out a circle with scissors?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your child make a square or a cross?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your child help with dressing?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child use 4-5 word sentences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is your child 100% intelligible to all listeners?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child ask many questions including "Who" and "Why" questions?"
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child follow multi-step directions without repetition?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have a vocabulary of 1500 or more words?

Quiz

Since it is so important to have age appropriate skills by the time they reach school age, here are a few skills that are essential to social and age appropriateness by the age of 4.

Results

If you answered "No" to any of these questions please come in for a free screening.



Featured Therapist

THELMA F. MUJICA, LIC. OT



Thelma received her Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy degree in 1992 from Texas Woman's University in Denton. Her passion for children has been encompassed in her professional work in a variety of settings that include inpatient care, neonatal intensive care units, public schools, and for the last seven years, in pediatric outpatient care. Thelma's interest of sensory processing in children and the developmental progress of premature infants encouraged her to pursue hundreds of continuing education hours to support her knowledge base. She became certified to administer and interpret the Sensory Integration and Praxis Tests – the hallmark assessment tool for identification of sensory processing problems. Her work to develop programs influencing development of children is well-known in our area.

Thelma enjoys spending time with her husband and two beautiful girls.

DANA D. GUERRA, MPT



Animals, children and therapy are a match for Dana. Her love of animals has translated into a profession where she can work with all three. As a Registered Hippotherapist, Dana runs Jumping G Equestrian Center in Pharr. The center focuses on providing children with special needs a specialized treatment technique called Hippotherapy. After receiving her Bachelor of Science from Baylor University, Dana pursued a Master of Science in Physical Therapy from Southwest Texas State University. She brings experience to Milestones from medical centers, school districts and other therapy centers blending her talents into a well-rounded therapist. Most recently Dana has attended Pediatric NDT and Electrical Stimulation for Pediatrics as well as developing her interest in Aquatics, orthotic recommendations and Kinesiotaping.

In between work at the equestrian center, Milestones and other professional organizations such as American Hippotherapy Association and North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, she finds time to spend with her husband, four large dogs, three cats and five horses.

SUCCESSSES What parents are saying...



Months in therapy had been spent on gait training and though J always tried, he never managed to take those steps by himself. About two weeks ago, J was being re-tested to see what progress he had made. As I was walking by, I stood in amazement as he walked down the hallway, stopped, squatted to the floor and came back up again – ALL BY HIMSELF!!! It not only brought tears to my eyes, it proves that all that hard work does pay off!!!
—Sylvia Rodriguez, PTA

M is an active and playful 10 year old boy. His biggest problem is that he is unable to eat food and gets most of his nutrition from his tube feeding. His mother must



schedule their lives around his feeding times. As M has grown older, he has become more interested in eating regular foods, especially when it involves participating with other kids at birthday parties and school activities. Over the last six months, using the special techniques that he has learned to make his swallowing safe, M has begun to eat soft foods. His favorite food is now a bean taco!!! M loves being invited out to pizza parties and other fun activities with his friends. —Carlos Vela, MA-CCC/SLP

L. is an 8 year old girl who, at age 2 years, choked on a marble causing significant brain damage. Her mother has cherished and helped her the last several years, keeping her safe from illness or injury. One of her main goals was to have L eat again, to taste the wonderful flavors of life. Through the persistence of her



mother and her therapist, during the last month, L has PASSED her follow up study on swallowing!! For the first time since the accident, L will begin to eat small portions of REAL FOOD!! —Eva Wilson, MA-CFY/SLP

When 12 year old Joe, a pre-teen with Down's Syndrome, started Speech Therapy service in 12/04, he had no means to communicate his wants and needs. He did not speak and used only a few gestures. Although he had been receiving therapy for several years, "nothing ever stuck". Mom was very discouraged and decided to try to Milestones as her last hope.

He was introduced to sign language, along with his family. Joe became very excited and is now using 2-3 word phrases to communicate with his family at home and in school to develop relationships with his peers. His family is excited about having Joe 'talk' to them for the first time in his life!!!!

Need Help For Your Child?



Come and visit us for a FREE CONSULTATION

Find out how Pediatric Therapy can help you restore health and gain the Skills of Living for your child.

Call us today at 956-661-0475 for your no-charge consultation

Milestones

Milestones is a comprehensive facility staffing 20 therapists – Speech, Occupational and Physical Therapists - who continually seek knowledge in their professional careers. Created in 2000 by three therapists, our focus continues to be on providing the best quality and innovative care to children with special needs.

Our new 11,000 square foot facility is equipped with optimum assessment and therapy tools to meet any need expressed to us by our loyal customers.

We are in the business of working everyday wonders, seeing faces light up with the pride of accomplishment, and helping families cope with challenge – one **milestone** at a time.

Give us a call today for your free screening at 956.661.0475.



WE CARE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CHILD!

Call us today for a free consultation at

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Milestones

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