

Make Referrals for Services to Support Healthy Habits for Patients with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) have different needs related to their diagnosis or development. No single provider is expected to address all of these needs, but a healthcare provider can refer a patient to the professionals who can help address them. If a patient already receives services from any of the professionals listed, recommend that the same professional address the identified challenges.

HEALTHY EATING CHALLENGES	REFERRAL
Sensitivity to food tastes and textures	Occupational Therapist and/or Speech and Language Pathologist
Highly selective eating	Registered Dietitian, Occupational Therapist, and/or Speech and Language Pathologist
Low muscle tone around the mouth	Occupational Therapist and/or Speech and Language Pathologist
Poor posture that interferes with sitting and with eating	Occupational Therapist
Seeks unhealthy snacks throughout the day	Board Certified Behavior Analyst and/or Psychologist
Challenging behavior during snack and mealtimes	Board Certified Behavior Analyst and/or Psychologist

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CHALLENGES	REFERRAL
Delayed motor skills impacting activity level	Physical Educator, Adapted Physical Educator, Physical Therapist, and/or Recreational Therapist
Difficulty understanding/following rules and expectations	Adapted Physical Educator and/or Speech and Language Pathologist
Social skill deficits that prevent involvement in group activity	Speech and Language Pathologist and/or Social Worker
Difficulty finding an inclusive after school program	Social Worker
Tires easily during physical activity	Physical Educator and/or Adapted Physical Educator
Over-stimulated by physical activity	Physical Educator, Adapted Physical Educator, and/or Occupational Therapist
Exaggerated fear of injury during physical activity	Adapted Physical Educator and/or Social Worker
Not meeting daily recommendation for physical activity	Physical Educator, Adapted Physical Educator, and/or Recreation Therapist

Some of these challenges may not seem major, but it is important for healthcare providers to take seriously any barrier a patient experiences to eating healthy or being physically active. Early intervention is key to promoting healthy behaviors.