

Pediatric
PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM



Every child is born with great potential.
Shouldn't every child have the chance to achieve it?





Overview

The Pediatric Psychology Program at Kennedy Krieger Institute is one of the nation's leading programs of its kind. We specialize in assessing and treating the unique emotional and behavioral needs of children and adolescents who are receiving medical treatment for chronic health conditions.

We use established principles of learning and behavior as well as evidence-based techniques to fully address each child's needs. Our treatment approach enables children to function better behaviorally, emotionally, and physically in home, school, medical, and community settings. It also helps them cope with and adhere to their medical care. It is our goal to ensure that these children and their families achieve a better quality of life.

"If not for the support of Kennedy Krieger, I don't know where my daughter would be. They just rolled up their sleeves and jumped right in. Nobody else knew what to do." —Teresa Boston, parent

Who We Treat

We treat children and adolescents ages one through 21 with a wide variety of disorders and developmental disabilities, including:

- Asthma and breathing problems
- Brain or spinal injury
- Brain tumor
- Cancer
- Cerebral palsy
- Cerebro-vascular disorders
- Chronic pain
- Craniofacial disorders
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Developmental disabilities
- Eating problems after illness, injury, or surgery
- Epilepsy (seizure disorders)
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Heart, kidney, or liver disease
- Hemophilia and blood disorders
- Neurological disorders
- Neuromuscular disorders
- Orthopedic disorders
- Pre- and post-organ transplantation
- Rehabilitation from physical injury
- Sickle cell disease
- Skeletal dysplasias
- Sleep problems
- Spina Bifida



Our Treatment Approach

The demands of complex medical problems can place an extraordinary amount of stress on children and their families. Our approach helps to ensure that these children develop appropriately, and function well both behaviorally and psychologically, despite their medical conditions.

We employ several therapeutic techniques, including behavior analysis and cognitive-behavioral therapies, to teach children how to cooperate with and participate in the management of their medical conditions. Our licensed psychologists and affiliated staff help to coordinate these services with multidisciplinary healthcare, rehabilitation, and educational teams.

Our therapists also provide consultation to allied health professionals in a variety of inpatient and outpatient pediatric settings at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, the Johns Hopkins Children's Center, and various schools and community healthcare facilities.



How We Can Help

We help patients and their families with medical conditions by teaching them how to manage pain, anxiety, and depression, and how to adhere to prescribed medical care. Examples include:

- Taking medicine
- Behavioral management of pain and anxiety
- Breathing treatments and respiratory assistance
- Tracheostomy care
- Restricted diet
- Exercise programs
- Wearing glasses or hearing aids
- Wound care
- Dressing changes
- Repeated blood tests
- Spinal taps
- Intravenous catheter insertion
- Chemotherapy
- Transfusions
- Radiation therapy
- Dialysis
- Bowel and bladder management
- Stoma care
- Self-catheterization

A Story of Sisters

Shelby and Brenda Milligan may look small, but only a few years ago it took a team of eight adults to hold each of them down when it was time for a shot. The sisters' fear of needles was so extreme it completely derailed standard procedures like blood work or vaccines. Now, with the help of the dedicated pediatric psychology team at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, they've overcome that fear and can sit calmly while having blood drawn.

The girls, who both have an intellectual disability, also needed help with pill swallowing and managing attention, speech, language, post-traumatic stress, and behavioral problems.

After a rough day at school, Shelby used to come home and take her frustration out on her sister by hitting her. Brenda was the opposite.

"Brenda's the type of child who closes up. She's in her own little world," says Barbara, the girls' mother.

Now the girls can easily swallow prescribed pills and are learning to control their emotions and behavior and to express themselves. Brenda has a chart that shows pictures of how an elephant reacts to its feelings—stomping its foot on the ground when it's angry, for instance—and she follows the elephant's example. If something upsets Shelby, she slows down and takes deep breaths before reacting.

Their mother is learning some new things too. The therapists have helped Barbara come up with new ways to manage her daughters' behavior. On a calendar she keeps to chart the girls' behavior, she has (at the therapists' suggestion) switched from putting an X through bad days to drawing a smiley face on the good days. At the end of a good week, the girls get a treat.

With the help of the therapists at Kennedy Krieger, Barbara and her daughters are learning that even the smallest changes can yield big results.



Services We Provide

- We teach caregivers to foster healthy behavior, adaptive physical functioning, and positive psychological adjustment in their children with chronic health conditions.
- We teach children how to cope with everyday situations along with their medical problems. We also help them learn methods for managing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and pain.
- We help children and families overcome challenges that prevent them from following medical procedures. This allows them to consistently follow prescribed healthcare instructions and can reduce the need for medication.
- Our parent-child interaction assessment and therapy teaches caregivers how to handle problems resulting from their child's necessary healthcare routines.
- We teach parents and healthcare professionals to use behavioral and cognitive-behavioral strategies that help children cope with and adjust to their medical conditions and to participate in their own medical care.



Contact Information

For more information, to make a referral or request an initial evaluation, call our referral coordinator at 443-923-2900 or toll-free at 888-554-2080

TTY (for the speech and hearing impaired): 443-923-2645

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Pediatric Psychology Program at Kennedy Krieger Institute
707 North Broadway
Baltimore, Maryland 21205
www.kennedykrieger.org/pediatric-psychology

“Leah can be a tough nut, but the therapist figured her out very quickly and created an environment in which she could succeed.”

—Alison Hamilton, parent



Kennedy Krieger Institute

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Our Mission

We at the Kennedy Krieger Institute dedicate ourselves to helping children and adolescents with disorders of the brain, spinal cord, and musculoskeletal system achieve their potential and participate as fully as possible in family, school, and community life.