

What is the Out Loud Feeding Team?

The Out Loud Feeding Team consists of an occupational therapist and a speech pathologist who work together to assess and support children who have mealtime challenges. Our team may refer you for a feeding team assessment when general strategies or ideas have not assisted with supporting mealtime challenges. Prior to referring, your therapist will ensure that information is gathered (e.g., sensory profile) to ensure that the feeding team have all the information required to support your child.

Who does the Feeding Team see?

Many children go through stages of being fussy or have foods they won't eat. The Feeding Team can support families who have children with significant or persistent mealtime challenges or behaviours. Some of these difficulties may look like:

- refusing to try any new foods
- losing foods that they once accepted in their diets
- diets with limited items in more than 1 food category (ie, fruit, meat, dairy)
- diets with less than 20 foods
- distress or upset at mealtimes
- impact on your family's ability to enjoy food outside of the home
- oral-motor difficulties which make it difficult to chew and swallow.

What does a Feeding Team appointment look like?

Initially, the Feeding Team conducts a feeding assessment with you and your child which runs for approximately 75-minutes. This is a comprehensive assessment which allows parents/carers to discuss their concerns and priorities, as well as gather your child's feeding history. The therapists will also observe your child's feeding skills, including:

- Your child's ability to manipulate and safely swallow food in their mouth
- How your child tolerates the various sensory properties of foods e.g. texture, smell, look
- Using cutlery or drinking from a cup
- Your child's behaviour and interaction with food

We will then work with you to develop strategies to support your child's feeding at home school or the community. We will also make a plan for ongoing support or follow-up as required.

What do I need to do before my Feeding Team assessment appointment?

We ask that you fill out a daily food diary for 3-7 days prior to attending your appointment. This allows the therapists to see what a normal period of eating looks like for your child. The therapists will often use this information to workshop strategies with you, based on what your child already enjoys and eats regularly.

What happens if I need to cancel my Feeding Team appointment?

We ask that you give us at least 48 hours notice of cancellations for Feeding Team appointments involving two or more therapist. This gives us time to offer the appointment to another family on our waitlist. Any appointment cancelled with less than 48 hours notice will be billed as a late cancellation as per our policy.

What do I need to bring to my Feeding Team assessment appointment?

Please bring along your completed food diary, as well as a picnic meal (a small quantity of a variety of foods), along with the child's usual water bottle. We ask that you bring along a mixture of foods that your child enjoys, as well as at least one food that the child refuses/doesn't like or finds difficult to eat.

What does Feeding Team follow-up look like?

The Feeding Team aim to support your family to implement strategies in your environment and will customise a plan for your child, lifestyle and priorities. At the end of your appointment, you will receive a written or emailed summary of the strategies discussed during your appointment.

At your appointment, the therapists will discuss follow-up options based on your needs and preferences. These may include:

- Review with the Feeding Team approximately 6 weeks after the assessment (in person or via phone/zoom)
- Waitlist for Feeding Team Therapy
- Family to make contact with Out Loud if requiring further feeding team support

How much budget do I need to allow for a Feeding Team assessment?

Your initial assessment will be billed at 3 hours (75 mins contact and 15 mins administration for two therapists). Our usual clinic rate is applied for all Feeding Team appointments including assessment, follow-up or therapy. Our therapists are always happy to create a Budget Quote on request to help you work out a program cost for Feeding Team services based on the level of contact your child may require.

Why do I need to see more than one therapist?

Eating and drinking is a complex skill that crosses over several disciplines. Our occupational therapist and speech pathologist each have different knowledge and look at feeding in different ways.

Are any other therapists involved in the Feeding Team?

Some clients benefit from the specialist skills of a dietician, especially where there are concerns about growth or nutrition. Some clients may require the support of a psychologist, particularly where anxiety is contributing to feeding challenges. If we feel the support of a dietitian or psychologist if appropriate for your child, we'll discuss this with you.

Why do I need to see a different OT and SP when I already have these therapists as part of my team?

While our whole team does a great job of supporting children across all areas of development, having a Feeding Team as a separate pathway allows us to provide quality services in this area. Our Feeding Team therapists have specialist skills and training related to mealtimes. They are also incredibly passionate about supporting families as they navigating challenging feeding issues.