

Understanding Neonatal and Infant Therapy Services Across the Continuum of Care

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Akron Children's

Objectives

1. Describe and understand the role, scope, and purpose of the inpatient Neonatal and Infant therapy teams from birth through discharge from the NICU, Special Care nursery, or inpatient units.
2. Describe and understand the role, scope, and purpose of the outpatient Infant Therapy team from discharge and beyond with specific focus on best patient outcomes, partnering with families and engaging in best practice patient care.
3. Referrals to Rehab Services team to ensure patients receive the highest quality care within the most appropriate service delivery model.

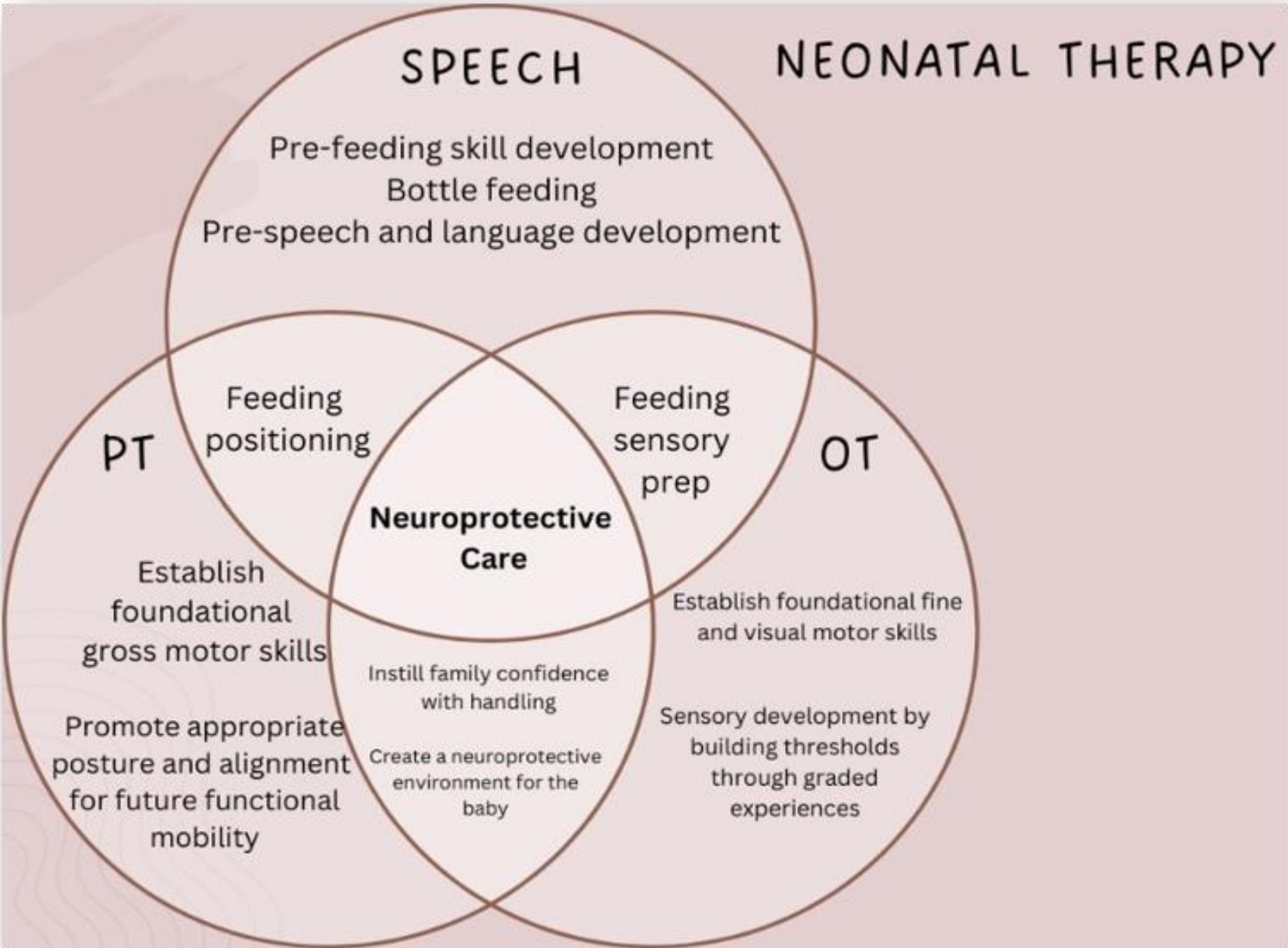


Inpatient Services

- **NICU/SCNs**
 - Neonatal Therapy order set
 - OT, PT, SLP
 - Automatic order sets
 - Therapy teams have deferral parameters to ensure services are being appropriately provided
- **Inpatient floors**
 - Infant Therapy order set
 - OT, PT, SLP, audiology and social work
 - 12 months and under



NEONATAL THERAPY



Inpatient OT/PT Treatment Progression

- Patient led
 - Prioritization of state organization
 - Building thresholds of positive experiences
 - Respect of stress signs to support calm state prior to increase functional demand
- Clustered-care
 - Communication with RNs, therapy team members and parents
 - Supporting primary functions
 - Sleep (achieve and maintain)
 - Eat (arousal)
 - Poop (massage and alignment)
 - Bond (STS, massage, reading cues)
 - Play (alignment, function)
 - Participating in cares (bathing)



OT/PT Intervention: Neuroprotective

- Two-person care
- State organization
- Supporting acquisition of self-regulatory skills
- Alignment and positioning



OT/PT Intervention: Neurodevelopmental



- Promotion of self-regulatory skills via supporting anti-gravity movements
- Massage (NTMTC)
 - Joint mobilizations; trigger point release; myofascial release
- Transitioning levels of arousal
- Organized vestibular input (recumbent sit, out of bed, etc)
- Modified manual edema mobilization
- Alignment and positioning



OT/PT Intervention: Developmental

- Functional play positions
 - Supported sit
 - Head control
 - Prone
 - Rolling
- Visual Motor Skills
 - Visual attention
 - Tracking
- Fine Motor Skills
 - Grasping and reaching
- Sensory thresholds/experiences
 - Out of bed treatments
 - Organized movement through rocking or a swing



Inpatient Speech/Feeding Therapy

NICU

- Pre-feeding skills
- Bottle feeding strategies
 - Positioning
 - Bottle/nipple recommendations
 - Pacing
 - Sensory strategies
- Monitor for dysphagia
 - Instrumental swallow assessment once term age if needed
 - Support for thickening as needed
- Pre-speech and language support
- Solid readiness

Inpatient

- Feeding
 - Bottle feeding support
 - Dysphagia management
 - Instrumental swallow assessments
 - Transition to solids
- Speech/Language
 - AAC support
 - Early communication development
 - Developmental play skills



Outpatient Therapy Services

- Developmental OT, PT, and Speech (communication)
- Infant Therapy Block
 - 90-minute session, 30 minutes of each discipline
- Feeding Therapy
 - <2 years old – Oral Motor Feeding Evaluation with Nutrition Consultation
 - >2 years old – Interdisciplinary Team Feeding Evaluation & Treatment
 - VFSS + FEES



Referral Decision Tree – OT/PT (<2 years)

Underlying Diagnosis/Parental Concern

OT Only Referral

- * Brachial plexus injury
- * UE dysmorphic features
- * Visual concerns
- * Irritability or difficulty calming
- * Difficulty sleeping or staying awake

PT Only Referral

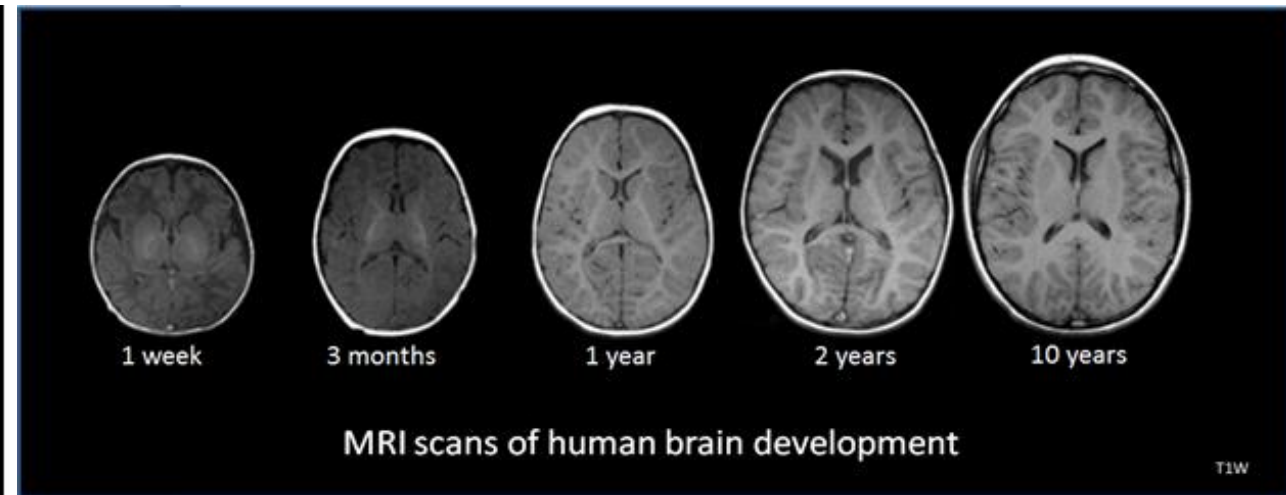
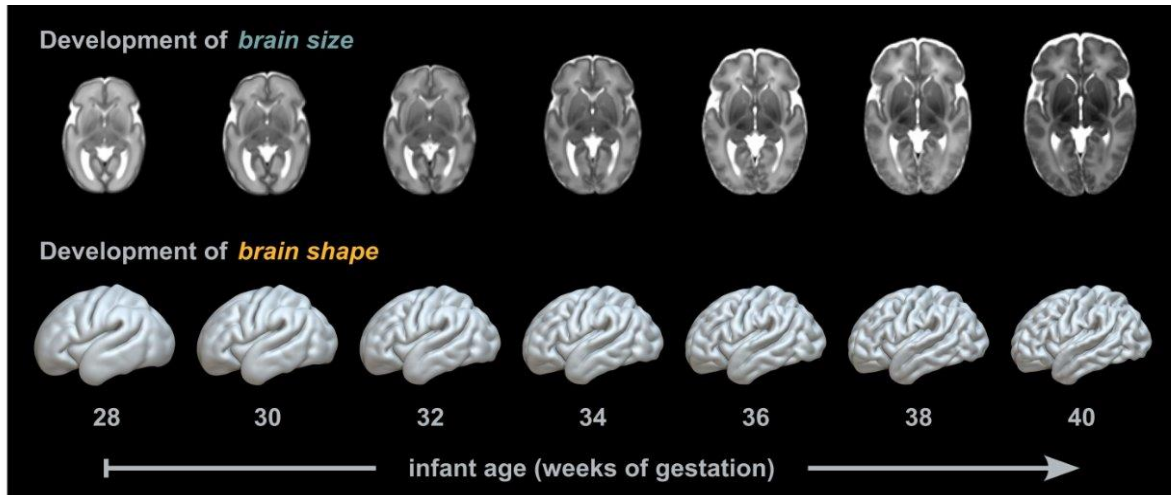
- * Head shape concern
- * Torticollis
- * Club feed
- * Hip subluxation

Infant Therapy Referral

- * Genetic disorders
- * Neurologic diagnoses
- * Abnormal muscle tone
- * Prematurity (≤ 36 weeks)
- * Cardiac diagnoses
- * Long term respiratory support needs

Considerations for Referrals

- Individualize Care Recommendations
- Early referrals help guide the neurological system as it is being built
- Early referrals lead to fewer interventions over time
- Therapy styles may differ depending on location and therapist
- Appropriate referral patterns lead to improved access
- Clinical Judgement and communication are key



PT/OT Order Codes

- NICU/SCN Admission Order Set: Neonatal Therapy Panel
 - PT, OT, SLP automatically ordered

Order Sets & Panels	
	Name
	NICU / SCN IP Admission Orders
	MV NICU IP Admission
	AUL NICU IP Admission Orders
	AUL NICU IP Neonatal Induced Hypothermia Admission Orders
	HOSP IP Regional Hospital SCN Admission

The screenshot displays the Epic Hyperspace interface for a patient named Orlando Clindoctst. The patient's information includes: Male, 5 y.o., 4/8/2020, MRN: 7199817, Needs Interpreter: Afar, Room: K616-01, Cur Location: Radiology, Main Hospital Building, First Floor, Code: Full, PCP: None, Isolation: None, No assigned nurse, Allergies: No Known Allergies, DOL: 5 y.o., FEEDING PLAN: Newborn, Delivery Method: None, ADMITTED: 4/5/2022 (1100 D), No active principal problem, Blood Type: Not on file.

The 'Order Sets' section is expanded to show 'Ancillary Consults'. The following items are checked:

- Inpatient consult to Case Management
Reason for Consult? SCN Admission
- Consult to Lactation
Reason for Consult? SCN admission
- Consult to Nutrition
Reason for Consult? SCN admission
- Inpatient consult to infant therapy
Reason for Consult? SCN admission
- Social Work consult
Reason for Consult? SCN admission
- PT evaluate and treat
Routine, UNTIL DISCONTINUED, Starting today at 1359, Until Specified
Reason for PT? NICU Admission
Providers: Please check activity orders and weight bearing status. Update as needed to ensure this order can be completed.
- OT evaluate and treat
Routine, UNTIL DISCONTINUED, Starting today at 1359, Until Specified
Reason for OT? NICU Admission
- SLP evaluate and treat
Routine, UNTIL DISCONTINUED, Starting today at 1359, Until Specified
Reason for SLP? SCN Admission

PT/OT Order Codes

- Inpatient Admissions

Orders from Order Sets
GEN IP Pediatric Admission

▼ Ancillary Consults

- Consult to Child Life
- Consult to Nutrition
- Consult to Social Work
- Consult to Infant Therapy for patients <1 year old
- Consult to Case Management
- Consult to Respiratory Care
- Consult to Pastoral Care
- PT Evaluate and Treat
- OT Evaluate and Treat
- SLP Evaluate and Treat
- Audiology evaluate and treat

Consult to Infant Therapy for patients <1 year old

Process Instructions: Always send an Epic Secure Chat message to the consulting provider notifying them of the consult and question(s) to be answered.

Reason for Consult?

Comments: The Infant therapy consult includes PT, OT, Speech, Nutrition, Audiology and Social Work.

Frequency: Until Discontinued 1 Time

Starting: 4/17/2026 Today Tomorrow For: Hours Days Weeks

At: 0832


Starting: Today 0832 Ending: Until Specified

Next Required

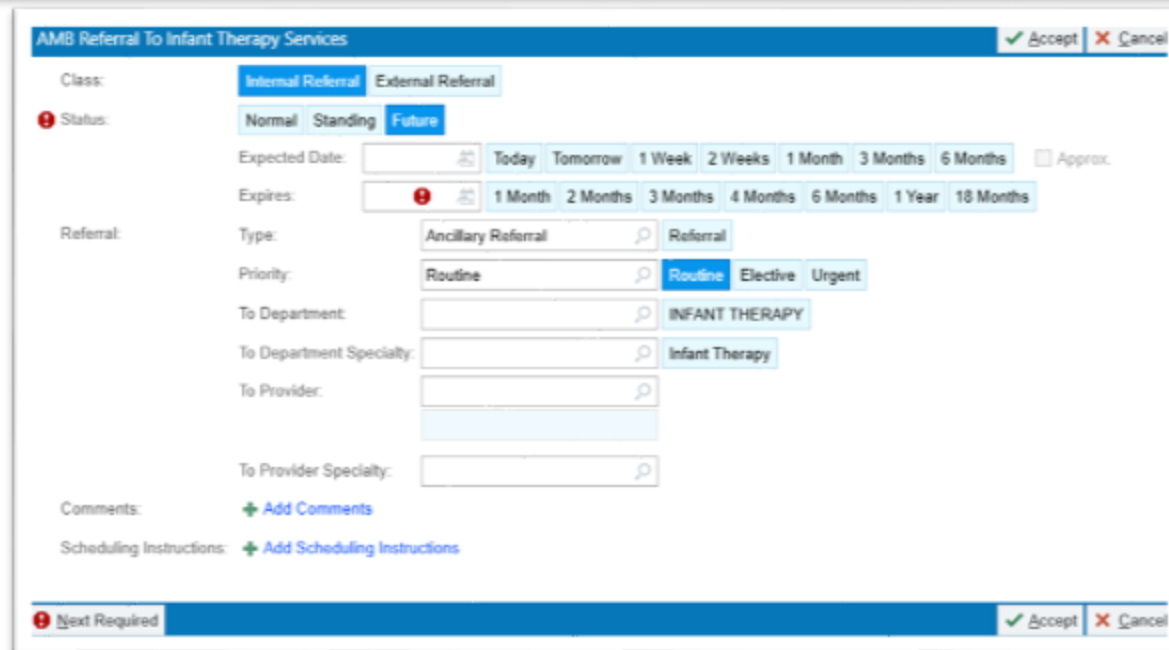
PT/OT Order Codes

- Outpatient Orders: AMB Referral to Infant Therapy Services

Use this function when ordering upon discharge from IP



Px Code	Name	Type
REF11	AMB Referral To Infant Therapy Services (aka INFANT)	Outpat Ref



AMB Referral To Infant Therapy Services

Class: Internal Referral External Referral

Status: Normal Standing Future

Expected Date: Today Tomorrow 1 Week 2 Weeks 1 Month 3 Months 6 Months Approx.

Expires: 1 Month 2 Months 3 Months 4 Months 6 Months 1 Year 18 Months

Referral: Type: Ancillary Referral Referral

Priority: Routine Routine Elective Urgent

To Department: INFANT THERAPY

To Department Specialty: Infant Therapy

To Provider:

To Provider Specialty:

Comments: + Add Comments

Scheduling Instructions: + Add Scheduling Instructions


Next Required

AMB Referral routes to Rehab Services (PT, OT, Speech, Audiology)




PT/OT Order Codes

- Outpatient Orders:
 - PT Eval and Treat: PT4

Px Code	Name	Type
 PT4	PT Evaluate and Treat	PT

- OT Eval and Treat: OT1

Px Code	Name	Type
 OT1	OT Evaluate and Treat	OT



PT/OT Order Codes

PT Evaluate and Treat Accept Cancel

Class: **Internal Referral** External Referral

Status: **Future**

Expected Date: Today Tomorrow 1 Week 2 Weeks 1 Month 3 Months 6 Months Approx.

Expires: 1 Month 2 Months 3 Months 4 Months 6 Months **1 Year** 18 Months

Referral: Type: **Referral**

Priority: **Routine** Elective Urgent

To Department:

To Department Specialty:

To Provider:

To Provider Specialty:

! Is this referral for Functional Neurologic Disorder and Pain Clinic (FND)?

Reason for Therapy:

Use precautions with:

Special instructions:

How many weeks of therapy are needed:
 1 Week 2 Weeks 3 Weeks 4 Weeks 5 Weeks 6 Weeks 7 Weeks
 8 Weeks Twelve Weeks Indefinitely See Comments

How many sessions per week of therapy are recommended:
 1 Session Weekly 2 Sessions Weekly Daily Every other day See Comments

Weight bearing: Touch down NWB Other (please comment)

Comments: [+ Add Comments](#)

[Additional Order Details](#)

! Next Required Accept Cancel

OT Evaluate and Treat Accept Cancel

Class: **Internal Referral** External Referral

Status: **Future**

Expected Date: Today Tomorrow 1 Week 2 Weeks 1 Month 3 Months 6 Months Approx.

Expires: 1 Month 2 Months 3 Months 4 Months 6 Months **1 Year** 18 Months

Referral: Type: **Referral**

Priority: **Routine** Elective Urgent

To Department:

To Department Specialty:

To Provider:

To Provider Specialty:

! Reason for Therapy: Vision Therapy

Interactive Metronome

Feeding/Eating s/p Acute Hospitalization

Functional Neurologic Disorder and Pain Clinic (FND)

Use precautions with:

Special instructions:

How many weeks of therapy are needed:
 1 Week 2 Weeks 3 Weeks 4 Weeks 5 Weeks 6 Weeks 7 Weeks
 8 Weeks Twelve Weeks Indefinitely See Comments

How many sessions per week of therapy are recommended:
 1 Session Weekly 2 Sessions Weekly Daily Every other day See Comments

Weight bearing: Touch down NWB Other (please comment)

Comments: [+ Add Comments](#)

[Additional Order Details](#)

! Next Required Accept Cancel



Clinical Ordering Guideline - Feeding



Akron
Children's

Clinical Guidelines

Antimicrobial Stewardship Program

Asthma

Burn Institute

Diabetes

ED

General

...

Edit

★ Following

🔗 Site access

+ New ▾ Promote ⚙️ Page details 📖 Immersive reader 📊 Analytics

Published 4/18/2025 📄 Share ▾ ✎ Edit ↗️

alteplase (Cathflo) Dosing

[Central Venous Access Device \(CVAD\) Priming Volumes for alteplase \(Cathflo\) Dosing](#)

Dysphagia and Feeding Disorder Clinical Ordering Guideline

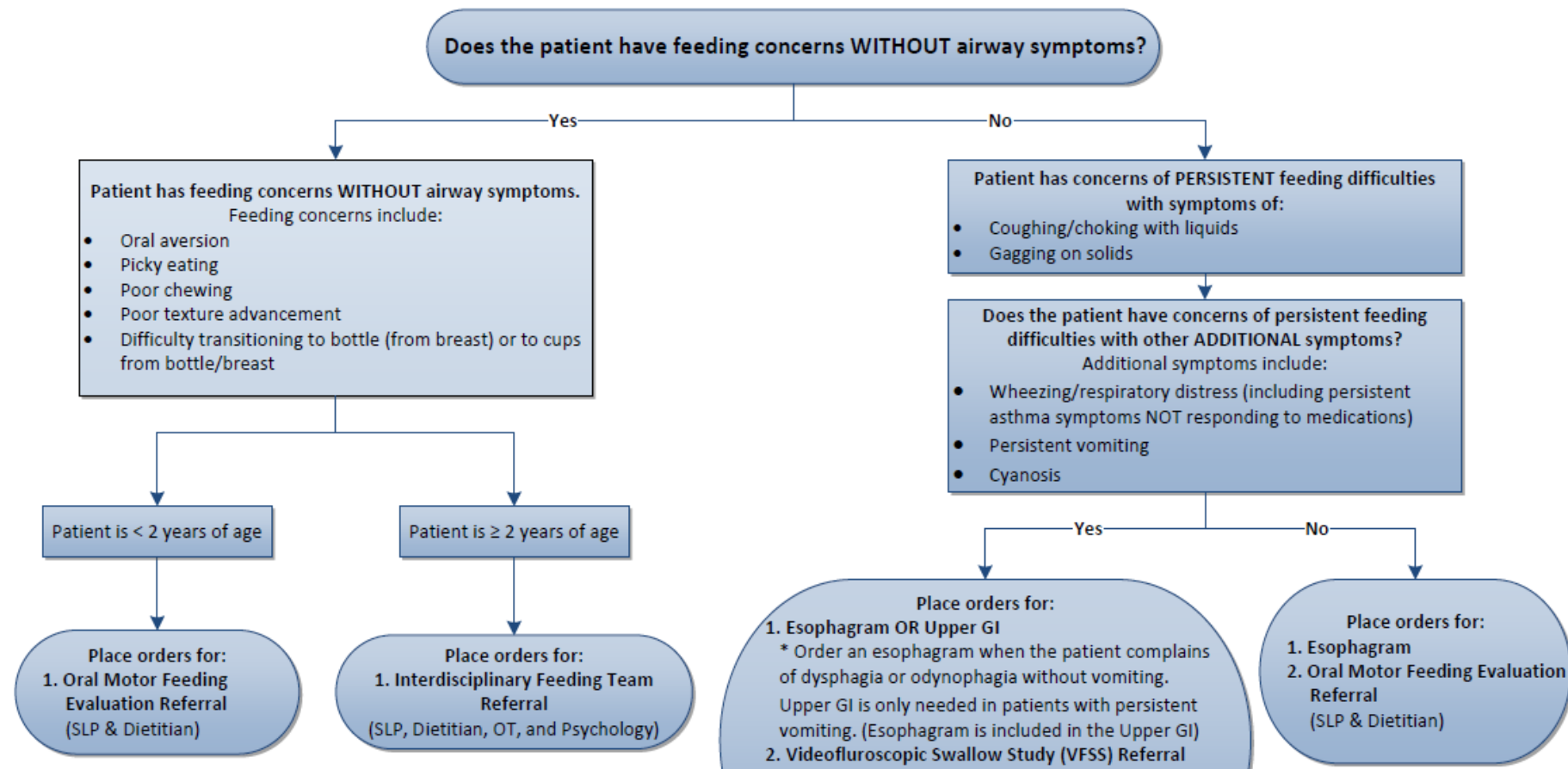
[Dysphagia and Feeding Disorder Clinical Ordering Guideline](#)

Epinephrine Anaphylaxis Guidelines

[Ambulatory Epinephrine Anaphylaxis Guidelines](#)

[Inpatient Epinephrine Anaphylaxis Guidelines](#)





Results/recommendations sent back to the ordering provider which may include:

- Recommendation to Continue Feeding Therapy
- Recommendation to refer patient to Specialist(s):
GI
ENT
Neurology
Pulmonary
Allergy
Pediatric Surgery

Epic Orders

Swallowing Function Study

- **Inpatient**
Swallow Function/Study Panel
- **Outpatient**
FL Swallowing Function (IMG743)
AND
SLP Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study (SLP27)

Esophagram

- **Inpatient**
FL Esophagram with Contrast Panel
- **Outpatient**
FL Esophagram (IMG742)

Upper GI

- **Inpatient**
FL Upper GI with air, without KUB Order Panel
- **Outpatient**
FL Upper GI with air, without KUB (IMG3001)

Oral Motor/Feeding Evaluation

- **Children < 2 years**
Oral Motor/Feeding Evaluation & Treatment w/Nutrition Consultation (SPE002)
- **Children >2 years**
Interdisciplinary Feeding Team Evaluation & Treatment (SPE003)



Outpatient Speech/Language Orders

- **Pre-School Age: Primary Speech and Language Evaluation**
 - Early language development
 - Speech sound development
 - Fluency (stuttering)
 - Social language
 - Pre-literacy skills
- **School Age: Secondary Language Evaluation**
 - Additional time allocated for advanced literacy skills
- **Vocal Cord Dysfunction (VCD) Evaluation**
- **AAC Evaluation**
- **Speech Resonance Clinic**
- **ADOS**



Closing

- Outpatient therapists often meet these children long after the crisis has passed. But their nervous system was shaped during survival mode.
- Therapy is not correcting delays—it is translating early experiences into functional movement and regulation.
- Role of Therapy
 - Rebuild safety in the body
 - Offer predictable, meaningful sensory input
 - Support regulation before skill acquisition
 - Honor the infant's story

