



Pediatric Psychology



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Pediatric psychology addresses physical, cognitive, social, and emotional functioning and development as they relate to health and illness issues in children, adolescents, and families. We explore the interrelationship between psychological and physical well-being of children, adolescents, and families including psychosocial and developmental factors contributing to the etiology, course, treatment, and outcome of pediatric conditions.

The demands of complex medical problems can place an extraordinary amount of stress on children and their families. The goal of a pediatric psychologist is to help ensure that children and families who experience these demands continue to develop appropriately and function well, both behaviorally and psychologically, despite their medical condition(s). We provide two aspects of service related to patients' care: **assessment and intervention**. First, we can assess for problematic behavior, emotion coping, and/or communication that might interfere with the child receiving ideal medical care. These problems may exist within the individual child, within the larger family context, or within the complex interactions between child and family. Our expertise is in assessing for problems within the complexity of child and family to identify a definable problem or set of problems that can be addressed. Next, we can employ evidence-based therapeutic techniques, including behavior analysis and cognitive-behavioral therapies, to develop a psychosocial treatment plan address those problems. Examples include:

- Teaching caregivers to foster healthy behavior, adaptive physical functioning, and positive psychological adjustment in their children with chronic health conditions.
- Teaching 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.
- Helping children and families overcome challenges that prevent them from following medical procedures.
- Teaching caregivers how to handle problematic behavior displayed by their child. These may be resulting from their child's necessary healthcare routines but may also be preexisting behavior problems that have been exacerbated by their medical condition(s).
- Teaching 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.