little mended hearts®

TO PARENTS FROM PARENTS

MEET THE CARE TEAM

Children born with heart conditions often have many health care providers and specialists who perform different but important functions. Sometimes, it can feel hard to keep track of them. Here is some basic information about some (not all) of the specialists who may treat your child.

PEDIATRIC HEART SURGEON

A pediatric heart surgeon is specially trained to perform heart surgery on babies and children but typically can also perform surgery on adolescents and adults.

PEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGIST

A pediatric cardiologist diagnoses and treats heart disease in children. All children diagnosed with congenital heart defects should see a pediatric cardiologists regularly.

NURSE

Nurses perform many different services for children and families. They are the health care professionals who care for your child in the hospital, at the doctor's office, and at schools. **Pediatric cardiac nurses** are nurses who specialize in treating children with heart conditions.

CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST

Child life specialists can support your child, help them understand their heart condition and help them cope. They work to help children feel more comfortable during doctor and hospital visits.

DEVELOPMENTAL SPECIALISTS

Often children born with severe heart conditions have developmental issues. Different specialists may work with your child including:

Physical Therapists (PT) help your child improve their ability to do physical activities, especially those involving large muscle groups like sitting, crawling, jumping and eating. They help children with their strength and muscle tone too.

Occupational Therapists (OT) help your child with activities of daily living including cognitive skills, like remembering colors and shapes, fine motor skills, like holding a bottle or writing, and social skills.

Speech Therapists help children with speech issues learn how to communicate more effectively including expressing themselves and language skills. They sometimes also help with feeding issues.

Feeding Therapists help children learn how to eat or feed. Sometimes a speech therapist or an occupational therapist will work with children on feeding too

Developmental Psychologists help with growth and development over the lifespan, including physical, cognitive, social, intellectual, perceptual, personality and emotional growth.

Educational Specialists: There are a wide variety of specialists who can help children with learning issues have better success with learning and with school.

OTHER SPECIALISTS

Other specialist may also treat your child for a specific condition. An electrophysiologists treats heart rhythm issues, a **hepatologist** treats the liver an **electrophysiologists** treats heart rhythm issues, a **gastroenterologist** treats the digestive system, a **nephrologist** treats kidneys.

You can find more information and helpful tips at ***www.mendedlittlehearts.org.***

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