

Faster Functional Outcomes in Pediatric Patients

The Case for Integrated Therapy Models

The Challenge:

Pediatric patients with developmental, neurological, or behavioral conditions rarely present with a single-area delay. Motor, communication, sensory, and behavioral needs are interconnected—yet traditional referral patterns often separate care across disciplines.

The Solution:

Integrated Therapy Models
An integrated model brings multiple disciplines (ABA, OT, SLP, PT) together under a coordinated plan of care—focused on shared functional outcomes, not isolated goals.

Why Integrated Care Works

1 Simultaneous Skill Development

Children receive support across multiple domains at the same time, rather than in sequence.

Impact: Faster progress toward real-world functional skills like communication, mobility, and independence.

2 Coordinated, Functional Goal Setting

Care teams align around outcomes that matter:

- Feeding independence
- Functional communication
- Social participation
- School readiness

Impact: Reduced duplication, clearer progress, and improved family engagement.

3 Increased Treatment Intensity (Without Fragmentation)

Higher therapy intensity while maintaining continuity across providers.

Evidence: Intensive, neuroplasticity, interdisciplinary pediatric therapy programs show significant improvements in functional mobility, endurance, and participation compared to standard outpatient models

5 Earlier Intervention Across Disciplines

Simultaneous access to multiple specialists reduces delays between referrals.

Early multidisciplinary involvement is associated with:

- Improved mobility
- Reduced functional decline
- Better long-term developmental outcomes

4 Reinforced Skill Generalization

Skills introduced in one therapy are reinforced across others.

Example: A communication strategy introduced in speech therapy is practiced during OT and ABA sessions.

Impact: Faster carryover into daily life.

The Bottom Line

Children do not develop in silos—and their care should not be delivered that way. Integrated therapy models align treatment with real-world development, producing faster, more meaningful functional outcomes when it matters most.

What the Data Shows

Multidisciplinary pediatric therapy is now the dominant model in over half of published rehabilitation studies, reflecting a shift. Integrated care models demonstrate improved functional outcomes, quality of life, and symptom reduction. Intensive interdisciplinary programs produce greater gains in functional disability scores and readiness for change. Parrish J, Chmielewska N, Bentley K. The Importance of the Multidisciplinary Team and Social Support in Pediatric Rehabilitation. Current Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Reports. 2025. <https://rdu.be/fb5yR>



When to Refer to Integrated Care

Integrated therapy is best for patients with:

- Autism spectrum disorder
- Global developmental delays
- Speech and language delays
- Neurological or genetic conditions
- Feeding and sensory challenges

Refer to MetroEHS

