

# Children's Rehab Network for medically fragile child

BY NANCY EAGLETON

Since 1991, Children's Rehab Network has provided care for children whose medical conditions require continuous nursing, education and therapeutic care.

At the two Pediatric Prescribed Extended Care (PPEC) centers, located in South Miami and Miami Gardens, the multidisciplinary team provides children with an enriching schedule that includes pediatric rehabilitation, special education, medical care and socialization. The nurturing environment is less restrictive than hospitalization or home healthcare and gives parents peace of mind while they are at work, school or caring for other family members.

"Our centers focus on the psychological, developmental, physical, nutritional, educational and social needs of medically fragile and technologically dependent children," said Kellie Brannon, director of therapy. "Children are evaluated and a plan of care is developed that places the child and their family at the heart of the program, and successfully addresses every aspect of the child's development."

The staff is comprised of experts in a variety of fields including pediatric subspecialists, psychologists, registered dietitians, social workers and the centers' own teams of nurses, therapists and teachers. The Children's Rehab Network staff has been acknowledged in various publications and the directors have won awards in their fields.

To qualify for PPEC, children, ages newborn to 21, must be considered medically fragile and require nursing intervention. In addition, the child's physician must prescribe the services in order for the child to attend. Qualifying medical conditions may include premature babies, babies with failure to thrive, babies with spina bifida, children with asthma who require respiratory therapy, children who require seizure control, or those awaiting organ transplants.

Because every child's needs are different, each child's daily schedule is customized to maximize his or her development. Children's Rehab Services' pediatric rehabilitation programs provide physical, occupational and speech therapy services. Nurses conduct daily assessments, administer medication and provide wound care, ventilator/tracheostomy care, central line care, feeding therapy and other medically necessary treatments.

"We work as a team with the family and



Infant Juliet Johnson is all smiles as she plays with Children's Rehab Network director of therapy Kellie Brannon.

the child's pediatrician to help stabilize and improve a medically fragile child's condition. Daily communication is key," Brannon said. "Our goal is for these children to go on to regular daycare, or public or private schools, as their medical conditions improve."

The special education teachers at Children's Rehab Network work to promote each child's self-acceptance and teach children methods to cope with his or her own reality. In addition, teachers from Miami-Dade County Public Schools provide stimulating educational activities directly at the center.

"Children learn at their own pace in a motivating environment, surrounded by caring people and other children. They also have fun — as all kids should," Brannon said. "This educational and social component is not traditionally found in home healthcare settings or hospitals."

Services at Children's Rehab Network are provided Monday through Friday, up to 12 hours per day. The centers offer transportation for the children to and from their homes, with Emergency Medical Technicians onboard every van.

The two Children's Rehab Network locations are at 5920 SW 68 St., South Miami, 305-665-0886, and 2727 NW 167 St., Miami Gardens, 305-622-7575. For more information, visit online at <[www.crnppcc.org](http://www.crnppcc.org)>.



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