

## Failure to Thrive

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### Definition/ cut-off value

Presence of failure to thrive (FTT) diagnosed by a physician as self reported by applicant/participant/caregiver; or as reported or documented by a physician, or someone working under physician's orders.

**Note:** For premature infants with a diagnosis of FTT also see: “Guidelines for Growth Charts and Gestational Age Adjustment for Low Birth Weight and Very Low Birth Weight Infants” (FNS Policy Memorandum 98-9, Revision 7, April 2004).

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### Participant category and priority level

Category	Priority
Infants	I
Children	III

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### Justification

Failure to thrive (FTT) is a serious growth problem with an often complex etiology. Some of the indicators that a physician might use to diagnose FTT include:

- weight consistently below the 3<sup>rd</sup> percentile for age;
- weight less than 80% of ideal weight for height/age;
- progressive fall-off in weight to below the 3rd percentile; or
- a decrease in expected rate of growth along the child’s previously defined growth curve irrespective of its relationship to the 3rd percentile (1).

FTT may be a mild form of Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) that is manifested by a reduction in rate of somatic growth. Regardless of the etiology of FTT, there is inadequate nutrition to support weight gain (2).

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### References

1. Berkow R, Fletcher AJ. The Merck manual of diagnosis and therapy. Rahway (NJ): Merck Sharp & Dohme Research Laboratories; 1992.
  2. Institute of Medicine. WIC nutrition risk criteria a scientific assessment. Washington (DC): National Academy Press; 1996. p. 100.
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**Clarification**

Self-reporting of a diagnosis by a medical professional should not be confused with self-diagnosis, where a person simply claims to have or to have had a medical condition without any reference to professional diagnosis. A self-reported medical diagnosis (“My doctor says that I have/my son or daughter has...”) Should prompt the CPA to validate the presence of the condition by asking more pointed questions related to that diagnosis.