



Our History

1939-1949

In 1939, Father Richard J. Cushing became Auxiliary Bishop of Boston. One of his strongest visions was to build a hospital for physically disabled children, regardless of race, religion, or ability to pay.

He soon joined forces with the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, an international order of Sisters dedicated to helping people in need.

Next, the Cardinal approached his friend, Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy, to finance the project. He and his wife, Rose, heard the Cardinal's plea and made an incredible \$600,000 donation to fund the new Hospital.

With the help of many benefactors and friends, the Cardinal's dream was realized, and a new venture to provide the highest quality of care to children with special needs was launched. The hospital was named the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Memorial Hospital, in honor of Joe Kennedy Jr., who was killed in action during World War II. Our doors opened on September 8, 1949 with more than 4,000 visitors joining in the celebration!

In the early years, 40 Sisters who lived at the hospital became nurses, physical therapists, pharmacists, and childcare specialists. They also managed the admissions and finance. Fueled by their commitment, personalized care for children and families became the hallmark of the hospital's tradition of care.

The dedicated Franciscan Missionaries of Mary provided round-the-clock care, and worked tirelessly to help each child reach his or her full physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual potential.

1950-1959

In the 1950s, the hospital provided care and treatment for children with Down's Syndrome and Cerebral Palsy, and worked aggressively to provide care to children suffering from the Polio epidemic. Medical services for children with a variety of disabilities were created, outpatient services began, and a Department of Social Work Services was added.

A new building, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, was constructed to help meet the needs of an expanding population and affiliations with area universities began. As the hospital's reputation spread far and wide, so too did its list of friends. Lou & Lutza Smith, dear friends of Cardinal Cushing, became part of the hospital's family, providing financial support, countless parties and entertainment events for the children.



1960-1969

Responding to the changing demands in health care in the 1960's, our philosophy evolved from providing convalescent care to providing care that facilitated a child's return to home and the community.

A complement of licensed services, such as psychology and pediatrics, were added so that children both inside and outside of the hospital would have their rehabilitative, medical, and educational needs met under one roof. In 1961, our first [surgical suite](#) opened in a new pavilion, named after Lou and Lutza Smith. Evolving through the years, these services have grown to become a state-of-the-art surgical complex for ambulatory surgery.

In 1963, a portion of our campus was converted to classrooms to meet the educational needs of children with physical disabilities, many of whom were patients in the hospital. The [Kennedy Day School](#) quickly became a unique educational facility for children with complex developmental and physical disabilities.

With the help of an interdisciplinary team and creative learning exercises, including music and computer technology, children learned to maximize their potential and become as independent as possible. Today, 70 children with complex physical and cognitive disabilities attend school on the our campus.

In 1967, the hospital opened its [pediatric dental clinic](#) in partnership with [Boston University's Goldman School of Dental Medicine](#), providing high quality pediatric dental care and specializing in the care of children and adults with special needs.

1970-1979

In the 1970s, the hospital continued to provide care within the restrictions of new financial challenges brought on by double-digit inflation and tightened reimbursement for services. Relying on the inspiration of our children, the strategic efforts of administration and staff led not only to the continuation, but the broadening of our mission.

The Cushing Pavilion, a three-story wing, was built in 1974, providing much needed space for rehabilitative, pediatric, and surgical patients, as well as a wide range of therapeutic programs.

The hospital expanded on its mission with an array of behavioral health care programs that included Cognitive Behavioral programs, and a four-day evaluation program.

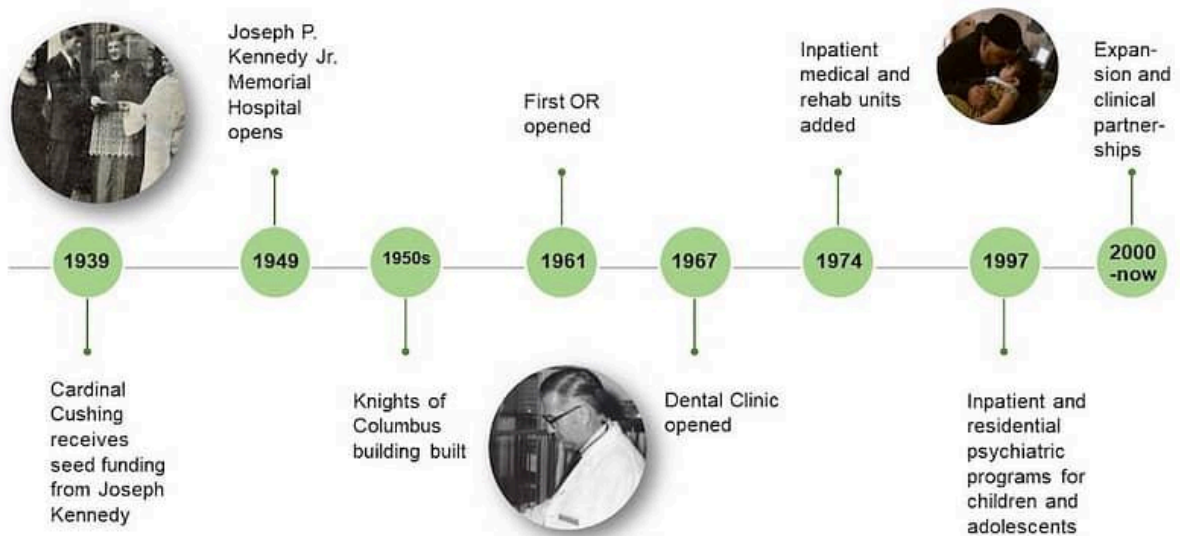
By the end of the 70s, 60 percent of the children served were coping with learning, emotional, or developmental challenges rather than more readily apparent physical disabilities, reflecting significant growth in our continuum of services.

1980-1989

In the 1980s, the hospital reorganized and consolidated its services, resulting in an increased capacity to serve more children. The [Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program](#), an innovative program for ventilator dependent infants and children, was undertaken with the cooperation of all the major medical centers in New England. Growing rapidly from its first days with one ventilator dependent child, the program now cares for 20 children on a daily basis, making it a unique program in New England.

The [Pediatric Rehabilitation Program](#) for children who experience a traumatic injury or illness grew tremendously during this time as well. Today, under the direction of a Pediatric Physiatrist, an interdisciplinary team provides an integrated program of medical and rehabilitative care for each child and family.

Brief history of Franciscan Children's



1990-1999

The hospital entered the 1990s with a new name – Franciscan Children's Hospital & Rehabilitation Center. Remaining eternally grateful to the Kennedy family for their commitment and generosity through the years, the Hospital's memorial to Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. is maintained through The Kennedy Day School. Several years later, our name was shortened to Franciscan Hospital for Children.

In partnership with [McLean Hospital](#), a national leader in behavioral health care, [Inpatient and residential psychiatric programs](#) for children and adolescents were added in 1997. Early interventional services were started in 1998 in conjunction with the New England Home for Little Wanderers, another leader in behavioral health care. An expansion in Pediatrics has coincided with specialized outpatient clinics such as Developmental Pediatrics, Orthopedics and Neurology.

Home care has also broadened our commitment to providing community based care. Pediatric resources extend into the community through partnerships with public and private schools.

A number of renovations to our campus have been made in the last ten years to improve the treatment and education experience of children, including newly remodeled recreation rooms, playrooms, waiting areas, and outdoor play spaces. A therapeutic pool was constructed so children could benefit from Aquatic Therapy.

2000-2009

In 2008, the Center for Motion Analysis, a state-of-the-art lab using technology that allows clinicians to understand how a child moves while walking, opened in the Physical Therapy department. In 2010, the [Inpatient Mental Health program](#) was expanded by another twelve beds to serve the growing demand for Mental Health services for children and adolescents.

2010-2019

In May of 2010, we began a major construction project to renovate and expand our Kennedy Day School. With a renovated 15,000 sq. foot school, plus the addition of a 20,000 sq. foot building, we have doubled our space available to children, increased available technology, and expanded programming.

2020-Now

All told, the school now contains 35,000 square feet of space and 25 rooms, including 14 classrooms and multiple specialty rooms, including:

- Alan Shoolman Memorial Library
- Boston Bruins Foundation Sensory Motor Room
- Culinary Arts Room
- Curriculum Room
- Dropkick Murphy's/Claddagh Fund Family Conference Room
- EchoStor Technologies Assistive Technology Room
- Health Room
- Hyman Novack Music Therapy Room
- Psychology Room
- Reading Room
- Suffolk Construction Red & Blue Foundation Assistive Technology Room
- Vision Room
- Vocational Skills Room

Adaptive equipment and new technology have been incorporated into the school's design, ensuring that the new space meets both the educational and health care needs of our complex students. As part of this project, we are thrilled to name a portion of our school the New Balance Foundation Wing, in honor of the Foundation's incredible \$500,000 gift to the project.

Today, we're Franciscan Children's and our unwavering commitment to serving children and families remains as it did in 1949.

Though our programs may change, expand, and evolve through the years, the one thing that remains constant is the heart of our mission. We provide a compassionate and positive environment where children with complex medical, mental health and educational needs receive

specialized care from people who are committed to excellence, innovation and family support...
so that children can reach their fullest potential and live their best life.