

OSSPEAC Conference

2026

Pediatric Feeding in Ohio Schools

Scope of Practice, Legal Mandates, and Ethical Decision-Making in
Educational Settings

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Learning Objectives



Roles & Scope

Identify team responsibilities across Ohio educational environments.



Medical vs. Educational

Distinguish clinical healthcare from school-based access boundaries.



Safe Feeding Plans

Formulate mealtime support strategies ensuring student safety.



Interdisciplinary Team

Execute collaborative workflows with families and providers.



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Financial Disclosures

Presenter is a faculty member at the University of Akron and receives a salary.

Presenter is an employee of Akron Children's Hospital .

School-Based Professional Scope

SLP Lead

Swallowing function and oral safety.

OT & PT

Seating posture and adaptive utensils.

School Nurse

Health monitoring and orders.

Paraprofessional

Direct supervision and feeding execution.

Legal Foundations for School Feeding

IDEA Mandates

FAPE requires related services when feeding affects stamina or learning.

ADA & Section 504

Mandates equal mealtime access and reasonable accommodations.

USDA Nutrition Rules

Requires dietary modifications for documented medical needs.



Key Takeaway

Schools cannot claim feeding services are purely medical. If a swallowing impairment impacts safe educational access, districts are legally required to evaluate and support the student.

Medical vs. Educational Model



Educational Model

Goal: Safe cafeteria participation and access.

Focus: Classroom stamina and mealtime inclusion.

Scope: Accommodations and health support.



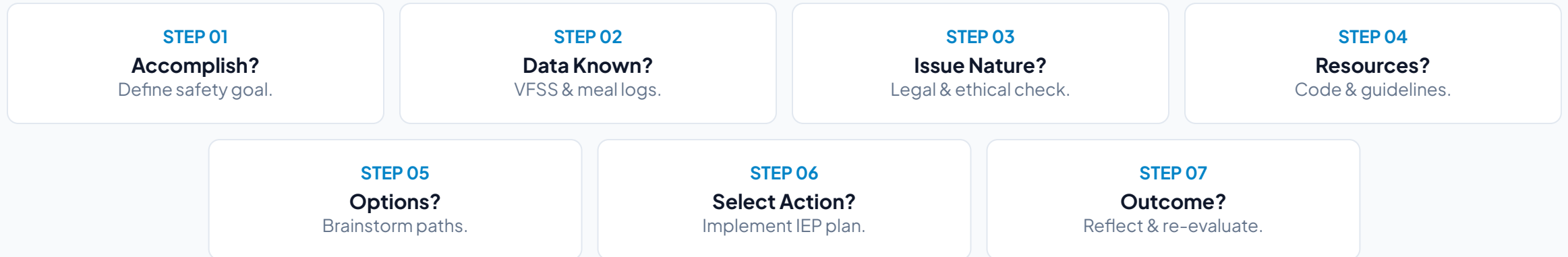
Medical Model

Goal: Clinical dysphagia rehabilitation.

Focus: Instrumental studies (VFSS/FEES).

Scope: Disease treatment and nutrition expansion.

7-Step Ethical Decision Framework



CASE STUDY

Student Profile: Elijah (Age 6)



Medical & Educational Profile

Spastic CP, nonspeaking AAC user, eligible under Multiple Disabilities.

VFSS Findings

Aspiration on thin liquids. Safe on IDDSI Level 2 mildly thick liquids.

Educational Impact

Mealtime fatigue reduces classroom stamina and attendance.

Applying Framework to Elijah's Case

Competence Check

New district SLP paired with experienced colleague for peer mentorship.

LRE & Safety Balance

Maintained cafeteria inclusion with 1:1 trained paraprofessional.

Interdisciplinary Plan

OT seating, Nurse medical orders, and SLP pacing guidelines.

Safe Feeding Plan Components

01

Physician Orders

Documented diet modifications and medical clearance.

02

Staff Training

Minimum 3 trained feeders to prevent coverage gaps.

03

Cafeteria Setup

Upright positioning and noise distraction management.

04

Ongoing Logs

Continuous tracking of intake and fatigue signs.

Interdisciplinary & Family Collaboration



Family Engagement

Validate family inclusion goals while establishing safe school parameters.

Cross-Disciplinary Goals

Joint target setting across SLP, OT, PT, and Nursing staff.

Medical Communication

Obtain ROIs for active exchange with outpatient gastroenterology & SLP.

Systemic Advocacy & Procedures

District Responsibility

Lack of prior experience does not exempt districts from FAPE obligations.

Written Procedures

Establish standardized district feeding guidelines.

Mentorship Models

Pair novice clinicians with experienced feeding SLPs.

Staff Allocation

Secure dedicated paraprofessional mealtime coverage.



Summary & Discussion

Safe pediatric feeding in schools requires combining legal mandates, ethical decision frameworks, and structured interdisciplinary teamwork.

Questions?

References



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