

# Developing a Comprehensive Feeding Team for Student Success: Excel in Collaboration

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# Agenda

- **Introduction and Background**
    - Meet your presenters and explore the foundation for developing comprehensive feeding teams in schools
  - **Development of the Team**
    - Discover practical strategies for building collaborative, effective feeding support teams
  - **Future Plans**
    - Learn about sustainability, growth opportunities, and next steps for your feeding program
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# Your Presenters:

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Regional SLP Consultant  
Madison Champaign ESC

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Occupational Therapist  
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Bringing combined expertise in speech-language pathology and occupational therapy to support student feeding success across preK-12 settings.

# Disclosure:

**Complimentary Registration was provided by  
OSSPEAC.**

We are grateful for OSSPEAC's support in making this presentation possible and fostering professional development in special education services.



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# Introduction and Background

Understanding the foundation and critical importance of comprehensive feeding support in educational settings

# Today's Learner Outcomes

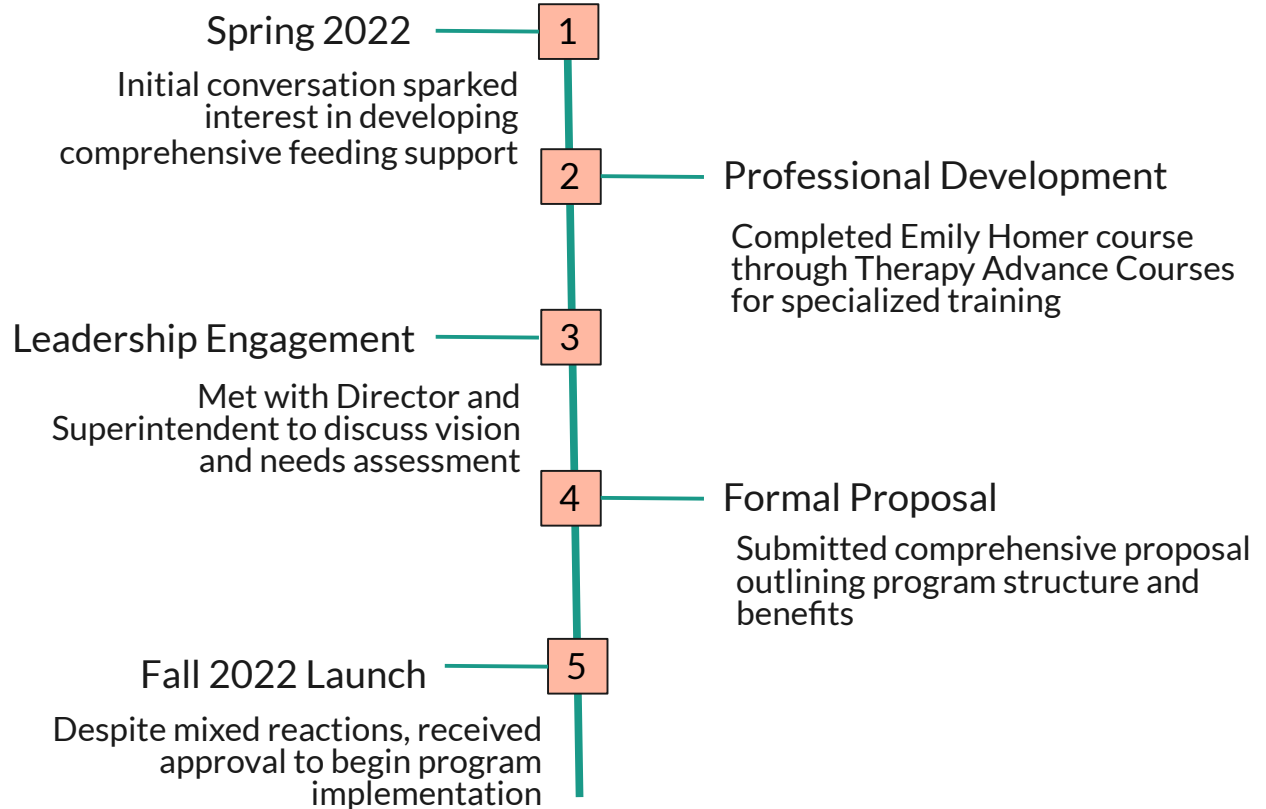
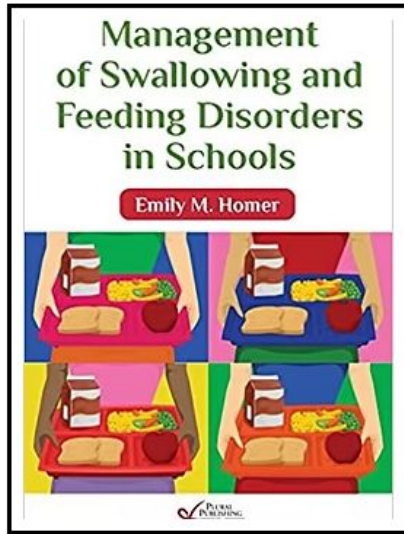


Explain the impact and importance of feeding skills on student health, safety, participation, and learning in the school setting.

Identify key roles and responsibilities of team members involved in school-based feeding support.

Outline steps to develop and implement a collaborative feeding team with consistent processes for referral, assessment, and intervention.

# Background and Beginnings



# Justification of Educational Relevance



School districts have the responsibility to address critical student needs that directly impact learning.

## Safety First

Provide a safe place to eat to reduce the risk of choking and aspiration

## Social Integration

Develop skills to eat efficiently with their peers within the allotted time

## Nutritional Support

Ensure adequate nutrition and hydration to maintain focus and endurance throughout the school day

## Health Maintenance

Support overall health to maximize school attendance and educational participation



# ASHA Guidelines



According to ASHA, a school-based feeding team enables comprehensive support through:

## Safe Mealtime Implementation

Developing and implementing individualized swallowing and feeding plans during school mealtimes

## Comprehensive Education

Providing targeted training to students, families, and school staff on safe swallowing strategies

## Staff Training Programs

Training classroom and cafeteria staff to modify food textures and liquid consistencies according to individual student plans

## Recognition and Reporting

Training classroom staff to identify signs of aspiration and changes in feeding skills, with immediate reporting protocols to the feeding team

# ASHA Guidelines - continued



## **Student Self-Advocacy**

Teaching students to advocate for appropriate food and liquid consistencies that meet their individual safety needs

## **Collaborative Partnerships**

Building strong relationships with parents, physicians, related service providers, and food services staff for comprehensive care

## **Therapeutic Intervention**

Providing direct intervention when indicated to improve functional eating skills and ensure safe swallowing for educational participation

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# Development of the Team

Learn the practical steps we took to build a collaborative and effective feeding support team

# Building the Team



## Team Make-up

- 2 Occupational Therapists
- 2 Speech Language Pathologists
- 1 School Nurse

## Commitment

- Professional Development
- Monthly meetings
- Flexibility

# Professional Development



- *Management of Swallowing and Feeding Disorders in Schools* by Emily Homer, Book Study.
- *Assessment and Treatment of Complex Feeding Disorders: Assessing and Treating The Whole Child* with Mary (Polly) Tarbell-Bickley through Education Resources, virtual live 12-hour course.
- *Treatment of Picky and Problem Eaters Using Food Chaining Therapy*, Fraker and Walbert through Northern Speech Services, virtual course.

# Developing Processes - Follow the Forms



\*\* All forms are modeled after Emily Homer's forms on her website and in her book.

1- Referral

2- Parent/Guardian Interview

3- Interdisciplinary Observation and Assessment

4a- Feeding and Swallowing Plan

4b- Behavior and Sensory Feeding Plan

# Supplemental Forms



- 5- [Team Meeting](#)
- 6- [Prescription of School Meal Modification](#)
- 7- [Pre-Instrumental Examination Information Form](#)
- 8- [Team Procedure Checklist](#)
- 9- [Communication with Medical Provider](#)
- 10- [Daily Feeding Log](#)

# Trends



## Preschoolers

Many preschoolers are coming to school with health concerns that impact feeding.

## Students in special programs

Students in resource classrooms needing support to be able to eat in the cafeteria with peers. We are able to work directly with their program staff.

## Students transitioning from preschool

As preschoolers with medical needs transition to kindergarten, we are in a great place to be able to support that transition.

## Behavior and Sensory-related concerns

Most of our consultations have centered on behavior or sensory-related concerns. Students who are very picky eaters are common.

## School Nurse support

One nurse who was new to the school environment, just needed to talk through some of her students.



# Practical Suggestions



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# Future Plans

What is our vision for the future?

# Future Plans



Continued professional development

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Promotion of our services

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Reduction of caseloads to allow more flexibility

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Find a nurse!

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Build confidence with therapists and staff who will provide services

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Follow up with staff

# Resources



- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), <https://www.asha.org> – Guidelines, position statements, and resources related to feeding and swallowing disorders.
- Fraker, C., & Walbert, L. (2025). Treatment of Picky and Problem Eaters Using Food Chaining Therapy [Online course]. Northern Speech Services.
- Homer, E. (2016). Management of Swallowing and Feeding Disorders in Schools. Plural Publishing.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, Federal law outlining special education services, including considerations for feeding and swallowing disorders in schools.
- Tarbell-Bickley, M. (2023). Assessment and Treatment of Complex Feeding Disorders: Assessing and Treating the Whole Child [Webinar].

## Questions



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