

Feeding Challenges: Sensory vs. Structural vs. Experience

Danielle Carey, MS, CCC-SLP, COM

Faculty

Danielle Carey has been a practicing speech-language pathologist over the last 12 years. During the early years of her career, Danielle worked in rehabilitation centers and hospitals. Over the last nine years, she has worked within the private practice setting. Danielle has created and launched a myofunctional program. While building the myofunctional program, Danielle was invited to complete presentations and professional training on tongue-ties and myofunctional disorders to local dental offices, orthodontists, and clinicians (ST, OT, PT). The improved awareness from related providers has resulted in a surplus of referrals. Danielle is a Certified Orofacial Myologist (COM®) through the International Association of Orofacial Myology (IAOM). She has achieved the following specialty training: TOTS (Tethered Oral Tissues Specialty Training), DIR/Floor-time Basic Certificate, VitalStim Certificate, and SOS Approach to Feeding. Danielle is a member of ASHA and the IAOM.

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About This Course

Feeding challenges in childhood through adulthood can arise from sensory differences, structural differences, a lack of experience with advanced textures, or all the above. Enhance your feeding knowledge with this holistic approach that acknowledges the role of structural differences, retained reflexes, sensory differences, muscle weakness, and abnormal breathing/rest posture/swallow patterns on mealtime participation and eating. Determine how to functionally assess for tongue ties and determine when releases are warranted. Learn and embrace a neurodiversity affirming approach that accounts for individual differences including emotional support and counseling techniques that contribute to positive outcomes for clients and families struggling with feeding.

Objectives

- Identify root cause(s) of pediatric feeding difficulty in infants through adolescents
- Differentiate between sensory-based, structurally based and experience-based feeding difficulties from case history review through assessment to prioritize intervention strategies
- Recognize the impact of neurodiverse affirming care to foster a positive relationship based on trust and felt safety
- Determine when and how to best advocate for clients with functional impairments caused by structural differences
- Apply counseling strategies and active-listening techniques to facilitate caregiver collaboration for supporting children with feeding difficulties
- Choose a plan of care to achieve optimal progress with safe and enjoyable feeding based on a client's case history and individual differences
- Utilize play-based treatment to build sensory-based, structural-based, and/or-experienced-based feeding skills

Audience

This course is recommended for OTs, PTs and SLPs practicing in the feeding and swallowing population.

Schedule – Day 1 8:40 am to 6:00 pm EST (US)

8:40-9:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens

9:00-10:30 Foundational Skills

- Typical Teeth Eruption Patterns
- Breastfeeding & Pediatric Feeding Norms
- Influence of Primitive reflexes on Feeding
- Case history analysis for signs and symptoms
- Key Questions for Parent Interviews

10:30-1:30 Structural Knowledge

- Tongue-Tie Grading
- Functional Tongue – Tie Assessment
- Frenectomy VIDEO (infant, child, adolescent)
- Postural Differences in relation to TOTS
- Active Wound Care Management
- Physical and Emotional Preparation for Frenectomy
- Dental Alignment, Enlarged Tonsils, High/narrow Palate and Compromised Airway

1:30-2:00 Lunch

2:00-4:30 Sensory Knowledge

- Influence of each sense on feeding and swallowing skills: Tactile, Visual, Gustatory, Auditory, Olfactory, Vestibular, Proprioceptive, Interoceptive

4:30-6:00 Experienced-Based Knowledge

- Signs of Readiness
- Preparing a child for introduction of solids, Hard Munchables
- Maintaining Nutrition/Hydration while weaning from bottle
- Baby-Led Weaning: Important considerations
- How to progress a child safely
- Food Selection, Engagement Tips, Counseling Support and helpful handouts

Schedule – Day 2 8:40 am to 4:00 pm EST (US)

8:40-9:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens

9:40-12:30 Assessment of Multifaceted Feeding Skills

- Infant Assessment
- Structural & Sensory Assessments
- Interview Questions for Experience Considerations
- We have the data, now what? Interpreting Data from your Assessment. Case Studies (infant, structural, multifaceted)
- Developing a Plan of Care: Working with the Child & Caregiver on developing the most appropriate treatment plan for each individual child.

12:30-1:00 Lunch

1:00-4:00 Treatment: Evidence-Based Intervention Strategies

- Infant Treatment
- Determine priority of deficits – Case Studies
- Treatment for structural differences
- Treatment for sensory-based deficits
- Treatment for experienced-based deficits

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Webinar: Feeding Challenges: Sensory vs. Structural vs. Experience

Presenter: Danielle Carey, SLP

September 19 and 20, 2025

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