

# *Jennifer Meyer, M. A. CCC-SLP*

## *Feeding and Dysphagia Resources, P.C.*

1105 Live Oak Dr.  
Providence Village, TX 76227  
214-538-7328 Fax: 1-866-927-2969  
FDResources@gmail.com

**Jennifer Meyer, M.A.CCC-SLP** is a Feeding Specialist, Developmental Therapist and popular international speaker, receiving exceptional ratings for her courses in the areas of Dysphagia, Pediatric Feeding Disorders and Neonatal Therapy.

She has 25 years experience developing comprehensive Feeding and Dysphagia programs in inpatient, neonatal, outpatient, Early Childhood, clinic-based and home-based settings. She served as Assistant Clinical Professor at Texas Woman's University and was the developer and Clinical Coordinator of the Center for Assisting Families with Feeding and Eating (CAFFE). She has functioned as a paid consultant to several Home Health companies in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, including mentoring more than 150 therapists and assisting in the development of a home-based High-Risk Infant program. Through her private practice, Feeding and Dysphagia Resources, she continues to provide consultation and program development for dysphagia services in a wide variety of settings.

Jennifer and her husband are the creators of Care-to-Collaborate.com, an online community of therapists dedicated to improving patient care through interdisciplinary cooperation and dynamic research-based education.

Through all of her endeavors, Jennifer moves forward in her mission to teach therapists to see themselves as facilitators in treating the child, supporting the family, and bringing back the fun, joy and family connection in eating.

Courses Available:

### **Fundamentals of Feeding Assessment and Treatment (6.0hrs Introductory Level):**

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Also known as “OMG I’ve got a Feeding Kid??” Are you new to Pediatric Feeding? Do you need help figuring out where to begin? The incidence of pediatric feeding disorders has risen sharply in recent years and many therapists feel unsure of their skills in this area.

Through hands-on practice, this 6-hour introductory presentation will orient you to the basic procedures of evaluating and treating feeding in pediatric patients. You will rehearse the steps of performing a Feeding Assessment including History-Taking, Oral Mechanism Evaluation, Feeding Skills, Writing a Diagnostic Statement, and making appropriate Recommendations. Learn how to differentiate between Oral vs. Pharyngeal feeding difficulties. Understand the foundational concepts and techniques for treating Sensory-based, Motor-based, Structurally-based and Experientially-based feeding disorders. You’ll even get a list of recommended items and resources for a Basic Feeding Kit and walk out empowered to take on this exciting and rewarding area of practice.

### **Pediatric Feeding – The Big Picture (15.0 hrs; Intermediate Level):**

Oral Motor Exercises! Sensory Stimulation! E-Stim! Behavioral Programming! How do you know when to use the different techniques out there? And which ones? How do you know where to start, when to “push”, and when to stop? There are so many questions surrounding Feeding Therapy and so many programs and techniques to choose from. In this intermediate course for SLP/SLPAs, OT/COTAs, and PT/PTAs, you will learn the five primary domains to assess and treat in feeding disorders: Sensory, Motor, Behavioral, Medical, and Environmental and how to address them in a comprehensive treatment program. Discover the relationship between a child’s gross motor abilities and his feeding skills and why the Sensory system is always the first place to start. Explore how having a child with a feeding disorder impacts the family and find out why you should always know which medications your client is taking. You’ll learn what you can and cannot do to help a child with severe gastrointestinal or cardiopulmonary problems eat and how Prematurity might contribute to feeding problems. Stop trying to use someone else’s “cookbook” and develop a unique program appropriate for each client and family.

### **Tools for Treating Feeding in the Medically-Challenging Child (13.0 hrs Advanced):**

Do you have patients that just aren’t in your textbooks? Can’t find a pre-packaged program for your caseload? Anatomy is the foundation for all we do and the more complicated the patient, the more we need to get back to the basics. Also known as “The Wighead Course”, this fun, highly interactive workshop for SLP/SLPAs, OT/COTAs and PT/PTAs will finally teach you Anatomy in a way you can understand, remember and really use in assessment and treatment-

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planning. You'll learn exactly how and why craniofacial anomalies affect feeding and breathing and when you can and cannot help. You'll understand why g-tube dependence causes sensory changes and what to do about it. You'll even learn how to use a stethoscope for thoracic auscultation to aid in detection of aspiration outside of the radiology suite. Then we'll evaluate some of the emerging therapy techniques and explore the relevant controversies in light of our solid understanding of anatomy and physiology. Come gain the skills to assess and formulate specific treatment techniques unique to each patient based on their individual anatomy and physiology and leave encouraged and motivated to go back to your medically-challenging patients with real tools to help!

**Feeding and Dysphagia in the Schools: Addressing a Medical Issue in an Educational Setting (8.0 hrs Intermediate Level):**

The number of children with severe disabilities being served in the school setting keeps rising. Many have Feeding Difficulties putting them at risk for life-threatening complications, yet they still need to receive adequate nutrition/hydration during the day to benefit from their educational program. How does a therapist address these needs in the Educational rather than Medical setting? What does the evaluation look like? What is the difference between facilitating safe feeding at school and implementing Feeding Therapy and can both be done in the school environment? Come learn how to screen your students for possible Feeding problems, perform a Feeding Assessment, and design a comprehensive plan to address the identified needs. In this intermediate course, for SLP/SLPAs and PT/PTAs and OT/COTAs you will learn how to work together to evaluate and choose different techniques and modalities in light of the specific needs of each child and the knowledge-base, roles, and scope of each discipline. Join us for a day of enjoyable, laughter-filled, interactive learning and come away excited to help your students flourish!

**NICU- Surviving & Thriving (14.0 hrs Intermediate)**

If you want to know what to do in the NICU but didn't learn it in school, this is the course for you! This 2-day intensive NICU training course explains the rationale, research, and interdisciplinary implementation behind current Developmental Care, Feeding Assessment, and Treatment practices in the NICU that lead to better immediate and long-term growth, maturation, and transition to oral feeding. Learn to identify an infant's earliest communication and how these behavioral cues should guide our intervention in activities such as infant-Driven Feeding, Kangaroo Care, Swaddled

Bathing, and Infant Massage. You will practice with various equipment to discover the importance and benefits of Developmental Positioning. Become familiar with the available standardized and non-standardized feeding assessments and common tools and techniques in Feeding therapy including positioning, nipples, and thickeners (or not!). Through classroom teaching, observation, and experiential learning you will learn how to promote health and well-being in our smallest patients both in the Unit and as they begin their transition home.

**Beyond the NICU-Making the Transition Home (8.0 hrs Intermediate):**

Babies born prematurely or with life-threatening conditions are surviving in greater numbers than ever before. More therapists are being called on to treat our youngest patients but few community-based therapists know what to expect when given the responsibility of assessing and treating NICU graduates. In this 8-hour presentation you'll learn what you, as the inpatient discharging therapist, or as the community-based therapist, can do assist our youngest, most fragile patients and their families in their transition home. Become familiar with some of the issues unique to the preemie and the very sick newborn, exploring ways the therapist can care for the infant, and educate and empower the caregivers as they navigate this stressful journey. Identify the child's behavioral cues, integrating this information into both assessment and treatment of feeding and developmental issues. Through labs, you will practice infant handling and positioning techniques, and manipulate actual tracheostomy and g-tube equipment as we discuss its incidence in this population and ways to facilitate weaning. And finally, problem-solve the logistics and practicalities of putting it all together in a community-based NICU Transition Program with examples of paperwork requirements and suggested competencies based on ASHA, AOTA, and APTA guidelines.

**In addition to the above full courses, individual modules of 2-3 hrs each are available on the following topics:**

**Craniofacial Anomalies and Feeding: (3.0 hrs Intermediate):**

Breathing and eating are vital survival functions for any living being. But the presence of a cleft or other craniofacial anomaly can interfere with the normal breathing and swallowing process, affecting respiratory health, nutrition, oral-motor and speech development, and even parent-child bonding. Evaluating swallow function in a patient with a craniofacial anomaly can be quite complex and intimidating, but in this 3-hour intermediate course for SLP's, you will discover some basic, easy-to-learn principles for analyzing how the anatomy impacts the physiology. Come learn the importance of taking into account the changes that occur over the course of the surgical intervention, therapy and physical growth. You'll walk away with strategies for addressing the resulting feeding issues and providing appropriate patient/family education in this population.

### **Ethics and Malpractice in Dysphagia: How NOT to Screw Up (2.0 hrs Ethics)**

Who decides whether to place a feeding tube or remove it? What do you do when your client is *not* following your recommendations, placing himself at risk for aspiration? What if your client is a child and the caregiver is not following through? How liable are you in any of these situations?

In this 2-hour presentation, you'll learn to apply the principles of medical ethics to the arena of dysphagia. Practice implementing the ethical principles as outlined by ASHA, AOTA, and APTA in Feeding assessment and treatment through analysis of case studies and real life examples. Identify key types of personal boundaries and examine the role your own boundaries play in light of medical versus situational ethical paradigms and how these can keep you out of trouble. We will review recent malpractice litigation in the area of dysphagia, looking at our legal obligations. You will come away with solid guidelines to help you navigate common and not-so-common situations in dysphagia assessment and therapy so that you can help your patients and protect yourself.

### **Feeding and Dysphagia – What's it all about? (2.0 hrs; Introductory)**

An estimated 15 million people in the US suffer from dysphagia, or difficulty swallowing. Dysphagia is a multifactorial disorder with different issues and causes that need to be addressed specifically with each client and many different professions are involved in addressing these issues. In this 2-hour interdisciplinary orientation to dysphagia and it's components, you will learn three of the primary components of a feeding or swallowing disorder that need to be evaluated and treated and the common roles of the various disciplines involved. You will learn about the continuum of sensitivity and how sensory

issues are often mistaken for behavioral problems. You will understand the relationship between gross motor skills and oral motor skills and common and not-so-common signs of dysphagia. Most importantly, you'll gain a framework for understanding dysphagia with its many symptoms and causes and your contribution in treating it.

### **In The Thick of It – Thickening in Dysphagia (2.0 hrs Intermediate)**

How much do you really know about the use of thickeners in dysphagia? Have you ever considered the *harm* thickening might do? It is actually part of our responsibility as therapists to be knowledgeable about how a thickener might negatively affect a patient's respiratory, gastrointestinal, or nutritional status. How do temperature, time, speed of oral transit, and even enzymes in saliva affect viscosity? We'll examine the available research regarding various thickeners and their possible complications as well as the effects of thickening on hydration, nutrition, and medication absorption. Armed with this knowledge, you'll be better able to decide when and if to recommend thickening and to choose the right viscosity and the right thickener for your dysphagic patients.

### **NICU – Where It All Begins (2.0 Intermediate)**

Few students are taught how to do therapy with preterm infants and even fewer students get actual experience in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Formal internship programs in Neonatal Therapy are very rare and limited to large urban hospitals. However, many smaller suburban hospitals are opening NICU's and staff therapists are being called on to serve these patients and interact with the neonatal staff. Get a 2-hour orientation to what is going in "The Unit". Through the use of lecture, photographs, videos, demonstration, and audience participation, we will examine the history of the NICU, neurological development of the neonate, current Developmental Care practices supported by research. You will learn about protection of developing sensory systems, Developmental Care equipment, reading infant cues, and indicators of feeding readiness. Come away with a better understanding of where your NICU graduates have come from and a foundation for neonatal therapy.

### **Peds and Trachs – What Do We Do? (2.0 hrs Intermediate)**

Working with children with tracheostomies is something our Scope of Practice says we can do, but few of us get much practice. Being comfortable with how a "trach" works

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and its effects on feeding is actually quite simple once you understand the basic anatomy and a few fundamental principles of physics. In this highly interactive presentation, through demonstration and hands-on inspection of various tracheostomy tubes, you'll gain a thorough understanding of the different parts of the tube, when and why different types are used, and how they impact respiration, swallowing, and vocalization. You'll be able to predict the effects on feeding and learn therapeutic interventions to minimize these effects.

Bring a soft doll so that you can practice the positioning and handling techniques and take home handouts for parent training and education.

### **Beyond the G-tube (2.0 hrs Intermediate)**

Therapy doesn't stop because a child gets a gastrostomy tube. The process of weaning from a G-tube should actually begin on the first day of placement. Do you know the indications for G-tube placement, how it can be an important part of Feeding Therapy, and the immediate and long-term implications for feeding? Learn what to do in therapy while the tube is there, how to minimize complications and negative consequences, and how to put the pieces in place to facilitate decreased dependence or eventual weaning. Practice techniques to facilitate oro-pharyngeal sensory development and prevent aversion. Go back to your caseload with an understanding of how a G-tube fits into an overall Feeding Plan, instead of replacing it.

### **Table Manners – Designing an ethical, legal, and collaborative Feeding Team (Ethics, 2.0 hrs)**

The face of service delivery in feeding and dysphagia is constantly changing to accommodate payer considerations, legal stipulations, staffing constraints, and new technology. We are continually challenged to find ways to work together with other professions to provide integrated, top-notch therapy, while maintaining our ethical and legal boundaries. But often we're not sure which lines are okay to cross, which ones to blur, and which are etched in stone. How do we build a team that includes the caregivers and other allied health practitioners without compromising our licensed scope of practice? Tensions may run high when issues of occupational integrity are at stake.

Using the Codes of Ethics from the AMA, ASHA, AOTA, and APTA we'll build a framework for clinical and administrative decision-making in what seem to be gray areas. Learn and

practice specific communication skills and strategies for team-building and crafting good inter-professional relationships. Explore various scenarios as we apply our guidelines and strategies to real-life examples in the emerging world of collaborative practice.

**Using Touch to Change Lives from the NICU to the SNF (3.0 hrs Introductory):**

Have you ever looked at your low-functioning or medically-fragile patient and thought, “I have no idea how to help you”? Despite all their complications, there *is* something you can do to help your patients heal more quickly, develop more appropriately or regain skills more easily. It is the intentional, focused use of beneficial touch.

Learn how to promote stability and reduce stress by stabilizing the autonomic nervous system – a necessary foundation for development or rehabilitation. You can even help facilitate and integrate oral reflexes necessary for feeding and speech. In this 3-hour introductory presentation you’ll learn forms of massage that are safe for all of our patients, even premature infants. You’ll also be introduced to a very new approach used in Russia and Poland called The Masgutova Method®, which can have the added benefit of facilitating better feeding skills. You’ll get to practice several techniques and leave with a thorough understanding of how, when, and where to employ them.

For more information, please contact:

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