

Models for Addressing Dysphagia

Swallowing and feeding team models will look different depending on the make-up of your district:

- School-based teams** – team members who are assigned to the school make up that team’s dysphagia team. SLP, OT, PT, nurse, etc.
- System core team**- a separate team, comprised of an SLP, an OT and school nurse who specialize in swallowing and feeding, travels to various school sites to serve students with dysphagia.
- Combination teams** –district has some schools with dysphagia trained teams on campus and some schools that rely on a system core team.
- Contract services** – district contracts services with a private consultant when the district has not dysphagia trained SLPs on staff.
- School building level team** – an SLP in a specific school may have knowledge and experience in pediatric dysphagia and works with the building administration to develop procedures to work with dysphagia cases. The school district at large may not have a formal process/ procedure in place but the school building base model may begin at the school level and lead to the development of district policies, etc.
- Referral source** – an SLP in a school system receives no support on a building or district level but continues to work with parents to obtain an outside referral and provides the safest feeding procedures to the staff and documents this process

Team Approach to Dysphagia

- The interdisciplinary approach involves each member of a group of professionals, each whom brings a specific area of expertise.
- A true interdisciplinary approach involves each member of the group sharing the philosophy for diagnosis and treatment in addition to being willing and able to work with other team members within the group. (Arvedson & Brodsky, 2002)
- Be aware of each person’s role
- Share information
- Realize personal professional limitations in relation to dysphagia
- Be open to suggestions and to problem solving
- Have open communication among the team members