### The School-based SLP and Dysphagia

According to Arvedson, 2000, speech-language pathologists are encountering a growing number of children who require modified diets and dysphagia management.

A national survey conducted jointly by ASHA’s Special Division 13 (Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders) and Special Division 16 (School-Based Issues) reported that 35% of SLPs practicing in the schools serve students with dysphagia (Owre, 2006). Given this information, it is important that the school-based SLP understand their role in dysphagia management.

### The Goals of Modified Food Service

- Prepare and serve consistent and reliably texture-modified foods and thickened beverages
- Produce and serve acceptable and aesthetically appealing texture-modified foods and thickened liquids
- Produce and serve texture-modified beverages and foods with adequate nutritional content

### Mechanical Soft and Pureed Foods Served in Schools

- Chicken Nuggets: NDD Level 2
- Puree Chicken Nuggets: NDD Level 1
- Mechanical Altered Chicken Nuggets: NDD Level 2
- Regular Chicken Nuggets

### Food Consistency Modification Levels

- **NDD Level 1**: Dysphagia-Pureed (homogenous, very cohesive, pudding-like, requiring very little chewing ability)
- **NDD Level 2**: Dysphagia-Mechanical Altered (cohesive, moist, semisolid foods, requiring some chewing)
- **NDD Level 3**: Dysphagia-Advanced (soft foods that require more chewing ability)
- **Regular**: All foods allowed.

### Roles and Responsibilities

ASHA outlines the roles and responsibilities of the school-based SLP in working with dysphagia:

- Provide information and guidance to students, families, and caretakers regarding the nature of swallowing and swallowing disorders.
- Consult and collaborate with medical providers throughout planning and intervention.
- Train caregivers and educational staff on safe eating and swallowing techniques.
- Instruct families, caregivers, and educators on the social-emotional relationship between feeding/swallowing and educational success.
- Facilitate the student’s ability to efficiently chew and swallow more safely and more efficiently.
- Integrate swallowing function intervention with communication function intervention.

### Consistency Modifications for Students with Modified Diets

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**References**