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Supporting your child to enjoy safe and independent

eating and drinking

***Speech and Language Therapy***

Eating and Drinking

Kimi Ora School

Speech and Language Therapy Team

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#### Supporting Your Child

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#### Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

#### Eating and Drinking

#### Difficulties

**Dysphagia** is difficulty chewing and swallowing. It is common in people with physical disabilities, due to weakness or difficulty coordinating muscles.

**Aspiration** is when food, fluid or saliva goes into the airway. This can lead to choking or infection.

People may also have difficulties with eating and drinking for **sensory** reasons. They may have had only negative experiences of food, or they may dislike the way that certain foods feel, look, sound or taste.

The SLTs at Kimi Ora will support you and your child if you experiense any of these difficulties.

At Kimi Ora, the speech and language therapy (SLT) and occupational theapy (OT) team will work with whanau to make an eating and drinking plan for each student. This is based on:

* The family’s experiences and concerns
* Assessment at school
* Talking with paediatricians and dieticians
* Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study (VFSS) if required

We will ask you to check the plan and let us know of any changes you see at home. The SLT will then support the class team to follow the plan.

The SLT will train staff to deliver tube feeds via PEG, NG tube, and pumps as necessary.

We support students with dysphagia and sensory eating difficulties by:

* Giving sensory input
* Modifying diets (pureeing foods, thickening fluids)
* Using adapted feeding equipment
* Positioning while eating
* Providing positive food experiences
* Mouth Magic oral health programme
* Sensory Oral Sequential Approach (SOS)

Our hope is that your child will be able to enjoy eating and drinking as safely and independently as possible.

Some students may need a VFSS. A VFSS is a video x-ray of swallowing. It lets us see how the lips, tongue, jaw, throat and esophagus are managing food and drink. We can see what strategies may help your child eat and drink more safely and easily.

You, your child, and the school speech and language therapist will go to this assessment together. The school SLT will set up this appointment if they want more information about how your child is managing their food.

Find more information at <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/swallowing/Videofluoroscopic-Swallowing-Study/>

# What is a VFSS?