



# Feeding Issues in Children with VACTRL

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Center for  
Childhood Communication

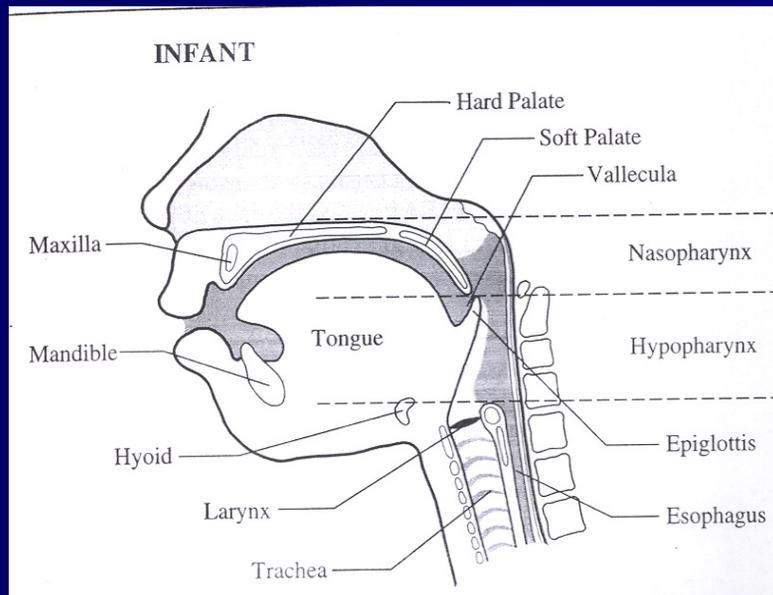


- "Any interruption or difficulty a child demonstrates in the acceptance, manipulation and or ingestion of a developmentally age appropriate diet."

- Failure to thrive
- Distress during meals
- Aspiration related respiratory disorders
- Refusal behaviors
- Failure to advance feeding skills/behaviors



- Multi-factorial
- No difference between sexes
- Not associated with lack of breast feeding
- Speech delay and feeding associated but not dependent on one another
- Tube feedings do not “cause” feeding disorders



- Nose
- Mouth/lips
- Teeth
- Hard/soft palate
- Suck Pads
- Epiglottis
- Larynx/trachea
- Esophagus

# Development of Oral Feeding Skills

- |              |                                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| ■ Birth      | Suckle                            |
| ■ 1-2 Months | Suckle                            |
| ■ 3-5 Months | True suck<br>Sucking from a spoon |
| ■ 6-8 Months | Munching                          |

- 8-12 Months

Increased lip movement  
Tongue lateralization  
Vertical chew  
Biting

- 12-15 Months

Circular/rotary chewing  
Increased jaw stability

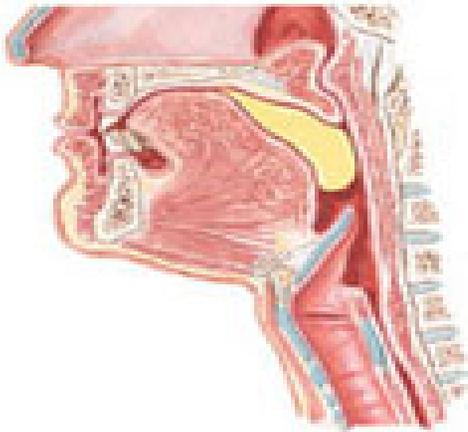
- 15-24 Months

Cup drinking stabilizes

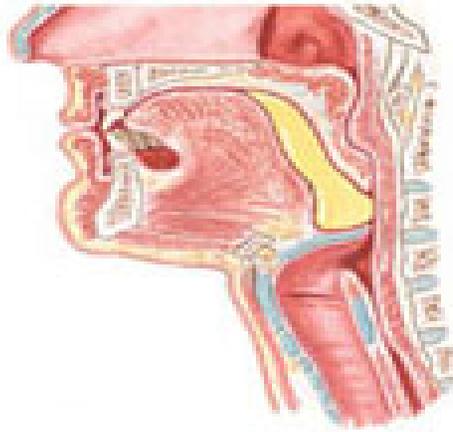
# Swallow Function

- Oral Phase
- Pharyngeal Phase
- Esophageal Phase

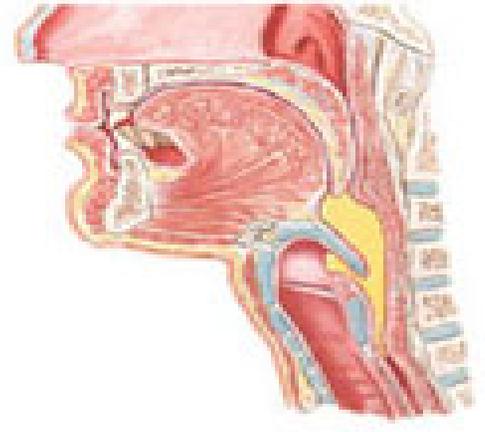
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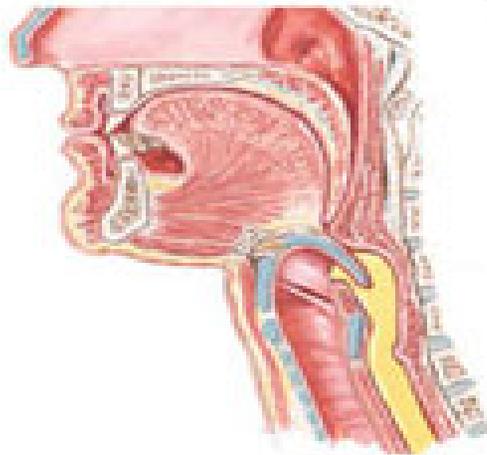
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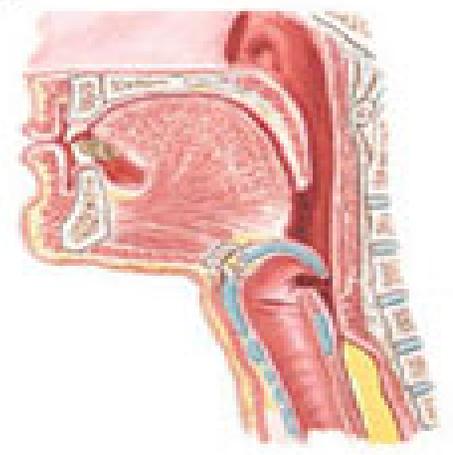
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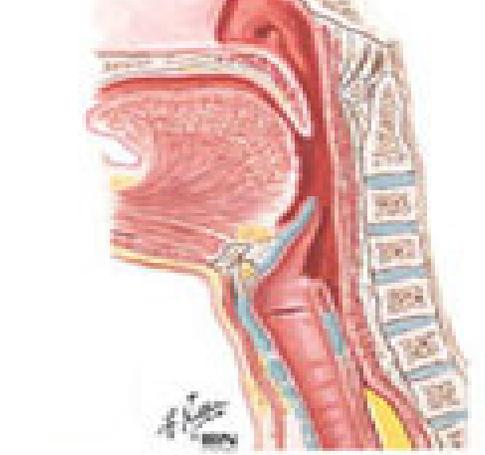
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# What can impact feeding progression in children with VACTERL???

- Medical Issues
- Anatomical/Structural Abnormalities
- Developmental Issues

# Management

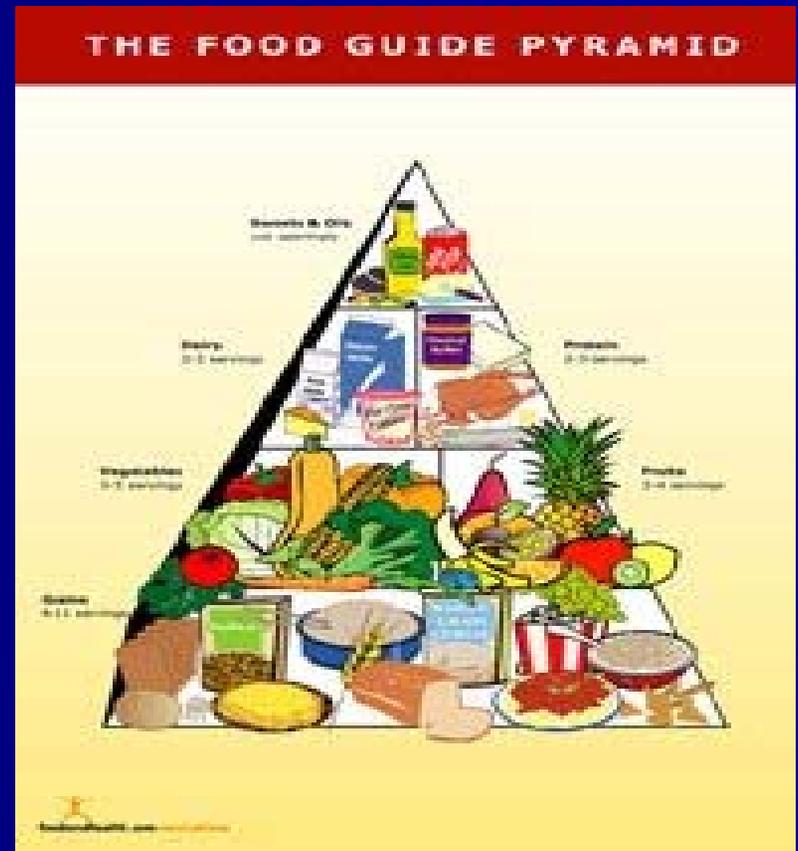
- Further medical evaluation/work-up
- **Strategies families can implement**
- **Therapy**
- **Other supportive community interventions**

# Strategies families can implement

- Nutritional counseling
- Recommendations to promote optimal positioning
- Activities to promote oral motor skills
- Activities to support attention to meals
- Recommendations to enhance mealtime structure

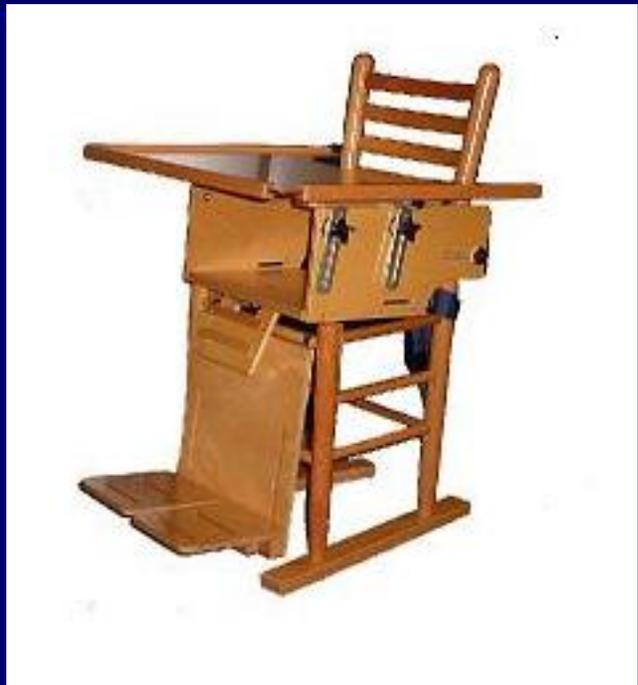
# Nutritional Counseling

- Formula changes
- Calorie boosting
- Vitamin recommendations
- Additional fluids
- Increase flavoring



# Positioning

- Ensure adequate trunk stability
  - Towel rolls or boosters in high chair or seat
  - Feet flat on floor
  - Specialized feeding chairs – Rifton; TumbleForms chairs; TripTrap Chair







# Activities to promote oral motor skills

- Bottle drinking
- Utensil change
- Lateral placement
- Altering texture of foods
- Increasing thickness of liquid



# Bottle Drinking

- Nipple/bottle choice
- Chin/jaw support
- Cheek support
- Pre-meal time stimulation



# Utensil Change

Promote enhancement of developmental skills

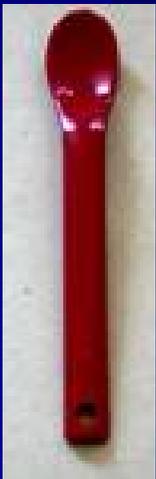
Maroon spoon

Cutaway cup/Honey Bear cup

Promote independence

Sassy spoon

Infa trainer cup



# Lateral Placement

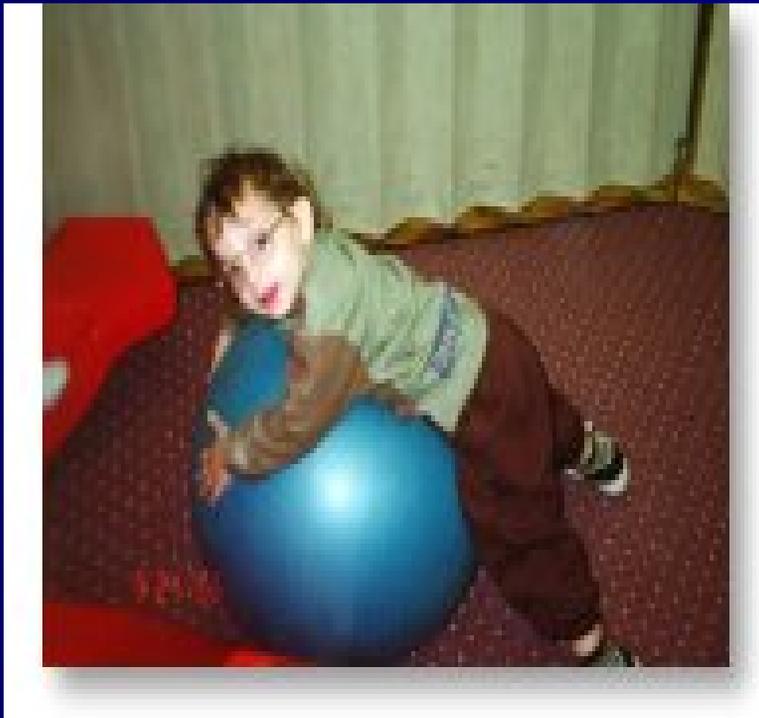
- Ideal to assist transition from smooth purees
- Offer spoon midline
- Move spoon to the left or right-do not twist the spoon-so it is on the lateral teeth or gums
- Bring the spoon out of the mouth
- Can be used with solids

## ■ Increase texture

- Puree table foods
- Add small amount of mashed foods to smooth puree
- Fork mash table foods
- Grind foods

- Increase thickness of fluids
  - Can assist with improving ability to protect airway
  - Can assist with skill development
    - Cereal or commercial thickeners
    - Pureed foods/jarred baby foods
    - Potato flakes

# Activities to promote attention to meals



Pre mealtime sensory stimulation

- \* Bouncing
- \* Heavy Work

Activities

Oral stimulation

Routine/schedule

# Mealtime Structure

- Regularly scheduled meals and snacks
- No grazing throughout the day
- Offer solids first; then fluids
- Offer meals and snacks in highchair or seated at the table
- Meals should last no longer than 30 minutes
- Do not use games or distractions
- Differential reinforcement
  - Use verbal praise and attention for positive mealtime behaviors
  - Ignore refusal or inappropriate mealtime behaviors

# Therapy

- Occupational Therapy

- Fine Motor skill development
- Sensory Processing

- Speech Language - Oral Motor

- Oral aversion
- Chewing skill development
- Swallow function

# Community Resources

- Early Intervention
- Local School District/IU
- Support Groups

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Resources:

Beyond Play

1-877-428-1244 or [www.beyondplay.com](http://www.beyondplay.com)

New Visions

1-800-606-7112 or [mealtime@new-vis.com](mailto:mealtime@new-vis.com)

Talk Tools

1-888-529-2879 or [www.talktools.net](http://www.talktools.net)

Sassy

1-616-243-0767 or [www.sassybaby.com](http://www.sassybaby.com)