



Full Day
Live Online

Saturday
January 24, 2026

Course Objectives

- Integrate whole-body, orofacial, and developmental assessments to pinpoint factors limiting safe, efficient feeding in newborns and young infants.
- Analyze biomechanical and functional red flags using photo/video case studies to guide individualized interventions.
- Select and adapt feeding tools based on biomechanical fit, clinical goals, and infant-specific needs.
- Recognize clinical indicators and treatment implications of manual therapy for effective collaboration to improve feeding outcomes.
- Apply symptom-driven problem-solving to develop targeted interventions for sucking issues—and practice additional positioning, handling, and movement strategies that impact feeding function—while avoiding common practices that may hinder progress.

Too many babies struggle longer than they should. Gain the advanced skills, clinical lens, and collaborative strategies you need to solve feeding problems before they spiral into costly, invasive interventions, and help families avoid the setbacks that keep them in crisis. Newborns and young infants with feeding challenges deserve **skilled, evidence-informed care**. Sucking problems can't be solved with a single tool or a one-size-fits-all approach. In this **expanded full-day advanced course**, you'll move beyond surface-level "tips" to gain a deeper understanding of infant feeding and the complex interplay between orofacial biomechanics, body alignment, and function. Through immersive **case studies**, detailed **photo/video analyses**, and real-world clinical scenarios, you'll sharpen your ability to identify the true root causes behind inefficient and dysfunctional sucking. You'll be able to spot **biomechanical red flags**, interpret subtle clinical clues, and navigate product design and tool selection with confidence. Every module delivers **actionable strategies** you can apply in your very next session, culminating in **hands-on skill building** that reflects over 3 decades of direct clinical experience. You'll leave with the practical tools to assess more precisely, intervene more effectively, and collaborate more powerfully, to **help babies feed well and thrive**.

When Baby Can't Suck:

Integrated Treatment of Infants Struggling to Feed An Advanced Course for Therapist

Time-Ordered Agenda

9:00-11:30am 2.5 hours Modules 1 & 2: Foundations & Infant Assessment

Module 1: Why This Matters — Meeting Parent Goals for Their Infant

- Explore the essentials of responsive caregiving and responsive feeding, including common obstacles faced by families.
- Understand the complex integration of the orofacial complex with the whole body in infant feeding.
- Navigate the differential diagnostic process, identifying early clues and red flags from prenatal to postnatal stages.
- Prioritize treatment goals, support parental mental health, and protect breastfeeding.

Module 2: Look at the Baby — Holistic Functional Assessment

- Evaluate the big picture: neurological, integumentary, cardiopulmonary, and gastrointestinal influences on feeding function.
- Recognize signs of airway compromise and know when to initiate interdisciplinary referrals and collaboration.
- Identify visual and functional indicators of biomechanical dysfunction relevant to feeding.
- Conduct detailed assessment of the orofacial complex, spotting key deviations impacting feeding success.

11:30-12:00pm 30 minute Break

12:00-2:30pm 2.5 hours Modules 3 & 4: Case Studies & Clinical Applications (2.5 hours)

Module 3: Case Studies — Clinical Problem Solving in Action

- Analyze a non-nutritive sucking and postural assessment revealing biomechanical red flags missed by initial clinicians.
- Learn to implement suck training and feeding modification to transform dismissed parental concerns into an effective, evidence-informed feeding plan.
- Examine how collaborative expertise changed the trajectory of a complex case illustrating the high cost of conventional care gaps—including hospitalizations, invasive tests, and avoidable NG tube placement.

Module 4: The Latch Clinic — In-Depth Video & Photo Analyses

- Master the biomechanics of fit and function to optimize sucking skills and facilitate return to breastfeeding.
- Develop advanced clinical decision-making skills to address oral aversion, bottle refusal, and reduce compensations.
- Navigate the complexities of bottles, nipples, pacifiers, and alternatives—integrating the science and art beyond just flow rates.

2:30-3:00pm 30 minute Break

3:00-5:30pm 2.5 hours Modules 5 & 6: Collaborative Care & Clinical Wisdom (2.5 hours)

Module 5: Feeding Therapy Meets Manual Medicine — An Evidence-Informed Approach

- Explore cranial restrictions, fascial tension, body alignment, and their intersection with sucking dysfunction.
- Gain insight into effective collaboration with manual therapists, including osteopaths, PTs, and other specialists, to build strong, collaborative feeding teams.
- Review a clinical case study highlighting the power of integrated care.
- Understand ethical and professional considerations related to scope of practice, training standards, and referral pathways.

Module 6: From Symptoms to Solutions — Essential Clinical Wisdom

- Build on clinical strategies introduced throughout the course with advanced, symptom-driven problem solving for common infant feeding challenges.
- Practice targeted handling, massage techniques, and movement/developmental activities designed to support feeding function.
- Learn evidence-based best practices—including what to avoid—to optimize outcomes.
- Participate in hands-on practice using infant doll models to deepen skill acquisition.



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Your Instructor

Nina Ayd Johanson, MA, MS, CCC-SLP, CLC, is a nationally and internationally recognized pediatric feeding expert, educator, and owner of Food Smart Kids, LLC. With over 31 years of clinical experience, she has trained thousands of therapists worldwide through the signature program she developed and continues to teach: AEIOU: An Integrated Approach to Pediatric Feeding. A Certified Lactation Counselor and Certified Educator of Infant Massage, Nina specializes in infants with sucking dysfunction, tongue tie, and breast/bottle feeding aversion. She has extensive expertise working with children with oral motor disorders, feeding tube dependency, complex medical needs, other developmental challenges and neurodiversity.

What's Included

- Includes comprehensive course handouts with references
- Includes Bonus PDF Downloads: charts, clinical reference guides and support materials
- Access all course materials and platform for one week post-training.
- Option to upgrade to Access Plus* for ongoing unlimited access and continued learning (private access to quarterly live Q&A calls that are recorded, updated resources and bonus content)

Who This Course is For

Licensed and/or certified SLP, OT, or PT

Credentialed Manual Therapy Providers and Lactation Consultants

Note: This course provides in-depth knowledge of manual therapy's role in infant feeding care and equips therapists with critical insights to collaborate effectively. While manual therapy training and certification are beyond the scope of this course, practitioners trained in these modalities are welcome and will find the content complementary to their expertise.

Continuing Education

7.5 Professional Development Hours

Certificates are issued upon successful completion. Please check with your state or national licensing boards to verify continuing education requirements prior to course purchase



Approved by the California Board of Occupational Therapy for 7.5 hours of post-professional education in the advanced practice area of Swallowing Assessment Evaluation and Intervention.

Registration Opens Online November 1, 2025

Regular Tuition \$395

Access Plus at Registration: \$69

Access Plus after Course: \$129

Register here: www.foodsmartkids.com/events



The Illinois Early Intervention Training Program has approved this event for 7.5 hours of EI credential credit