



## Red Flags: Oral-Motor Development

One or more of these items **seen in a pattern over several mealtimes** may be a Red Flag for concerns in the area of oral-motor development in young children with visual impairment. Always consider **consistency** and **impact** on the mealtime.

### Nursing and transitions:

- Difficulty latching on to the breast or bottle
- Uncoordinated suck while nursing or during bottle feedings
- Challenges transitioning from the breast to bottle and/or bottle/breast to cup

### Breathing and transporting food:

- Excessive gagging/choking
- Gaspings while attempting to suck, chew, or swallow
- Irregular breathing when eating
- History of GERD or reflux
- Frequent coughing with feeding without the presence of a cold or other respiratory illness
- Unusually long duration for mealtimes (Consistently longer than approximately 30-45 minutes)
- Recurrent lethargy or decreased arousal level during feeding times; may tire before consuming a full meal
- History of pocketing or overstuffing the mouth

### Physical differences:

- General hypotonia~ “low muscle tone”
- Facial grimacing during feedings
- Habitual open mouth position
- Presence of ‘tongue tie’
- Consistent tongue protrusion
- A diagnosis of a structural difference in the oral area such as cleft lip/palate
- Excessive drooling that is not associated with teething periods
- Limited changes in facial expression for, for example, while laughing or smiling
- Presence of highly arched palate

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