



ESSD 2026

Paediatric Dysphagia Pre-Congress Workshop – 19th -20th October 2026

Day 1: 19th October, 2026

Time	Topic	Presenter/s
08:30-09:00	Registration	
09:00-09:20	Welcome & Introductions	Kelly Weir
09:32-10:30	Session 1: Infant & Paediatric FEES – From set up to scoring • Framework & preparation • Equipment • Food preparation: age appropriate textures & consistencies • Conducting FEES with infants & young children • Time-out protocols and safety checks • Step-by-step examination • Positioning infants for FEES (infants, breastfeeding, practical positioning) • Theoretical introduction to FEES scores • Using rating scales & scoring	Dr Jana Zang
10:30-10:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
10:45-12:30	Session 2: Infant & Paediatric FEES – an ENT perspective • Practical application of FEES Scoring systems through video cases. • Rationale behind endoscopic evaluation • Clinical interpretation of FEES findings and decision making in everyday practice.	Dr Danielle Farnetti
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30-15:30	Session 3: “Paediatric Tracheostomy with Ventilation” • Incidence, prevalence and profile • Ecosystems: Child & family first • MDT • Scope of practice • Role definitions • Ventilator: basics • Eating, drinking and swallowing in the presence of tracheostomy ventilator dependency • Clinical and research evidence • Assessment considerations • (Re)habilitation considerations • In-line one-way valve placement: multisystem opportunities and limitations	Louise Edwards
15:30-15:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
15:30-16:30	Session 4: “Paediatric Tracheostomy with Ventilation” • Knowledge translation:	Louise Edwards

	• Clinical pathway examples • Case examples • Local application • Q&A	
16:30	End of Day 1 workshop	

Day 2: 20th October, 2026

Time	Topic	Presenter/s
08:30-08:45	Welcome & Introductions for Day 2	Kelly Weir
08:45-09:30	Oropharyngeal dysphagia in children with neuromuscular disorders. (45 mins)	Saskia Scholten
09:30-10:30	Oropharyngeal dysphagia in children with central nervous system disorders. (45 mins) (+15 mins Question time)	Sandra de Groot & Dr Karen van Hulst
10.30-10.45	Morning tea	
10:45-11:15	Use of VitalStim in Infants and children: What is the evidence? (30 mins)	Kelly Weir
11:15-11:45	Dysphagia in children with acquired brain injury: (30 mins)	Kelly Weir
11:45-12:30	Clinical Genetics and Dysphagia: Why It Matters for Clinical Practice. (45 mins)	Dr Jolijn Verseput
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30-2.00	Feeding difficulties and dysphagia in children with Beckwith-Wiedemann spectrum (30 mins)	Arianne van der Kooij
14.00-14:30	Learning to Feed in Infants with 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome: Challenges and Clinical Perspectives (30 mins)	Sarah Haverkamp
14:30-15:00	Dysphagia in individuals with SYNGAP1 encephalopathy: (30 mins)	Alecka Garrett (Pre-recorded)
15:00 – 15:15	Afternoon tea	
15:15- 15:45	Understanding Feeding Difficulties in Children with Noonan Syndrome: (30 mins)	Dr Leenke van Haaften
15:45-16:15	Feeding challenges in Angelman Syndrome and other Neurodevelopmental Disorders: (30 mins)	Cindy Navis
16:15-16:30	Wrap up	
16:30	Workshop close	

Paediatric Dysphagia Workshop Teaching Faculty

Workshop Chairs: Kelly Weir & Karen van Hulst

Associate Professor Kelly Weir, PhD

Joint Director of Allied Health Research,
The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne; and Principal Research Fellow & Speech Pathology Graduate Research Coordinator, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

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Associate Professor Kelly Weir is a joint Director of Allied Health Research at The Royal Children's Hospital, and Principal Research Fellow at The University of Melbourne. She is a certified practicing speech pathologist with extensive clinical and research expertise in paediatric dysphagia, particularly in tertiary acute paediatric hospitals. Kelly's research specialises in paediatric dysphagia and feeding disorders particularly aspiration-related respiratory disease, oral feeding on nasal high flow, paediatric and neonatal intensive/acute care management tracheostomy, and VFSS. She is an international presenter, has over 100 peer-reviewed publications and mentors speech pathologists and other allied health clinicians in undertaking clinically driven research in paediatric dysphagia and other specialty areas. She is currently a board member of the ESSD.



Dr Karen van Hulst, PhD Speech and Language Therapist, Clinical Epidemiologist Department of Pediatric Rehabilitation Amalia Children's Hospital, Radboud University Medical Center (Radboudumc) Nijmegen, the Netherlands E: Karen.vanHulst@radboudumc.nl	Dr Karen van Hulst is a Speech and Language Therapist and Clinical Epidemiologist at the Amalia Children's Hospital, Radboud University Medical Center, the Netherlands. She combines clinical practice, research and education in the field of pediatric neurorehabilitation. Her expertise focuses on feeding and swallowing disorders, oral motor function and saliva control in children with neurological conditions, particularly cerebral palsy. She is a member of the multidisciplinary Radboudumc Saliva Control and Swallowing Team and has authored numerous scientific publications on pediatric dysphagia and drooling. Dr Van Hulst obtained her PhD in 2019 on oral motor performance in children with cerebral palsy and is actively involved in the development of clinical assessment tools, professional education and national guideline development.	
Presenters – Day 1		
Jana Zang, PhD Universität zu Lübeck Sektion Medizin Institut für Gesundheitswissenschaften Ratzeburger Allee 160 23562 Lübeck E-Mail jana.zang@uni-luebeck.de	PD Dr. Jana Zang is a speech-language pathologist and currently works as an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Health Sciences, Department of Speech-Language Pathology, and as a Research Project Coordinator in the Department of Midwifery Science at the University of Luebeck, Germany. Her clinical and research focus is on swallowing development and dysphagia in infants and young children, particularly in neonatology and in children with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). She has a special interest in the adequate design and conduct of FEES for infants and vulnerable young children, and has published extensively on this topic.	

Researchgate profile: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jana-Zang/research		
Louise Edwards Louise Edwards (she / her) BSc (Hons) CertMRCSLT MHCP Paediatric Speech & Language Therapist Consultant SLT / Medico-legal Associate Cambridge Paediatric Medico-Legal Associates (info@cpmla.co.uk) Professional Doctorate in Health student University of Lancashire, Preston, UK ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5103-8223	Louise Edwards is a Speech and Language Therapist with almost 30 years' clinical experience working across acute, community and rehabilitation settings primarily within the UK, in the NHS, charity and medicolegal contexts. She currently works part-time in the National Health Service (NHS), alongside freelance clinical and research projects. Additionally, she collaborates internationally, exploring research, education and knowledge translation in global settings. Across her career, Louise has contributed to research and clinical evidence base nationally and internationally, primarily focused on airway, long-term ventilation, ABI, as well as recently contributing to research focused on SLT use of ultrasound in understanding vocal fold mobility in children. She has also contributed to national guidance, including as lead author on the Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists (RCSLT) paediatric dysphagia workforce review and as a co-author on the updated RCSLT ABI guidance. Louise is an invited guest lecturer at University College, London and De Montfort University and has been commissioned to develop webinars on a range of clinical practices. Louise is due to complete a Professional Doctorate in Health at the University of Lancashire in 2027. Her research explores SLT's lived experiences of working with children with a tracheostomy in community	

	settings. Louise thrives on connection and collaboration with SLTs and the wider MDT to achieve real-world, compassionate, knowledge translation and clinical excellence, through life-long learning and continued curiosity.	
Professor Daniele Farnetti	Professor Daniele Farnetti is a highly regarded ENT and Phoniatics specialist based at Infermi Hospital in Rimini, Italy, where he leads the Audiology and Phoniatics Service. Since 2005, he has served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Bologna in the Department of Biomedical and Neuromotor Sciences. He has also been a Contract Professor at the Universities of Ferrara and Parma, as well as at the Parma Conservatory of Music. With over 25 years of clinical experience, Professor Farnetti specialises in the assessment and management of dysphagia, with particular expertise in endoscopic and radiological evaluation of swallowing disorders. He has made significant contributions to research in dysphagia and phoniatics and has authored numerous scientific publications. Professor Farnetti has played an active role in several national and international scientific societies. He is a founding member of the Italian Study Group on Dysphagia (GISD), now the Italian Society of Deglutology, and a founding member of the European Society for Swallowing Disorders (ESSD). He also serves as Co-Chair of the Swallowing Committee of the Union of European Phoniaticians (UEP) and has been a member of the Dysphagia Research Society (DRS).	

Presenters - Day 2

Saskia Scholten, MSc, PhD candidate

Department of Pediatric Rehabilitation
Amalia Children's Hospital, Radboud University Medical Center (Radboudumc)
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Saskia Scholten, MSc is a speech language therapist and clinical health scientist specialized in neuromuscular disorders (NMD) within the neuromuscular center of the Amalia Children's hospital of the Radboud university medical center. She is specialized in orofacial muscle ultrasound and applies this technique in children with NMD and oropharyngeal dysphagia to measure the underlying disturbed mechanisms. She is a PhD student, currently studying the natural history of oropharyngeal dysphagia and dysarthria in Duchenne muscular dystrophy and myotonic dystrophy type 1.



Sandra de Groot Speech and Language Therapist

Department of Pediatric Rehabilitation
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Sandra de Groot is a speech language therapist at the Amalia Children's Hospital, Radboud University Medical Center, the Netherlands. Her clinical work is centered in neonatal care, including preterm infants and those with conditions such as congenital diaphragmatic hernia (CDH). In her outpatient practice, she focuses on children with developmental and neurological challenges in swallowing/eating and drinking, particularly those with cerebral palsy. Alongside her clinical expertise, she is actively involved in professional education, developing and delivering post-bachelor training programs for speech-language therapists and related professionals on pediatric feeding and swallowing disorders.



Jolijn Verseput Human Genetics Department, Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Researchgate: https://www.researchgate.net/scientific-contributions/Jolijn-Verseput-2206607768	Jolijn Verseput is a resident in Clinical Genetics at the Department of Clinical Genetics at Radboudumc in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. In her clinical practice, she has encountered a wide variety of hereditary conditions, including neurodevelopmental disorders, congenital anomalies, and hereditary cancer. She is currently taking a hiatus from her clinical duties to pursue a PhD focused on innovative methods to better characterize the phenotype of individuals with rare developmental syndromes. Alongside her clinical and research work, Jolijn is actively involved in teaching within the Bachelor of Medicine program of the Radboud University, contributing to various (elective) courses and the department's clinical Minor.	
Arianne van der Kooij S.A. van der Kooij, Drs. Clinical Speech-Language Therapist, Clinical Epidemiologist Department of Otorhinolaryngology (ENT) and Audiology Center Amsterdam UMC, location AMC, Amsterdam, The Netherlands s.a.vanderkooij@amsterdamumc.nl	Arianne is a Speech and Language Therapist and Clinical Epidemiologist at Amsterdam University Medical Center, the Netherlands. She has over 10 years of clinical experience specializing in the assessment and management of feeding and swallowing difficulties in infants and young children, as well as speech and language disorders. She is a member of the European Expert Center for Cleft, Craniofacial and Upper Airway Anomalies at Amsterdam University Medical Center. Her clinical and research interests focus on feeding and swallowing disorders, oral motor function, and speech disorders in children with cleft palate and Beckwith–Wiedemann Spectrum (BWSp). She is actively involved in national and international collaborations aimed at advancing evidence-based	

	care and improving outcomes for children with craniofacial conditions and rare disorders.	
Sarah Haverkamp Clinical Speech and Language Therapist, Department of Pediatric Otolaryngology (ENT), Wilhelmina Children's Hospital, University Medical Center Utrecht, the Netherlands E: S.J.Haverkamp-3@umcutrecht.nl	Sarah is a Clinical Preverbal Speech and Language Therapist at Wilhelmina Children's Hospital, University Medical Center Utrecht, the Netherlands. She has over 15 years of clinical experience specializing in the assessment and management of feeding and swallowing difficulties in young infants. She is a member of the multidisciplinary Cleft Lip and Palate Team and the 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome Team at University Medical Center Utrecht, where she provides specialized diagnostic assessment and treatment for infants with speech and swallowing difficulties associated with cleft palate and 22q11.2 deletion syndrome. She is committed to advancing clinical care through active participation in national and international working groups and actively contributes to research aimed at improving care and outcomes for this patient population.	
Alecka Garret, PhD Candidate Speech Pathologist Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Melbourne.	Alecka Garrett is a speech pathologist and PhD candidate working in Professor Angela Morgan's Speech and Language Team at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Melbourne. Her PhD aims to deeply characterise the communication and feeding profiles of children and adults with severe genetic epilepsies.	

Leenke van Haaften, PhD Speech and Language Therapist Department of Pediatric Rehabilitation Amalia Children's Hospital, Radboud University Medical Center (Radboudumc) Nijmegen, the Netherlands E: Leenke.vanHaaften@radboudumc.nl	Leenke van Haaften is a speech language therapist at the Amalia Children's Hospital, Radboud University Medical Center, the Netherlands. She combines clinical practice, education, and research, with a special focus on the assessment and management of feeding and swallowing difficulties in infants and young children. She has experience working with infants in neonatal care and is involved in several multidisciplinary centres of expertise, including those dedicated to children with rare congenital developmental disorders.	
Cindy Navis • ENCORE Expertise Centre for Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Erasmus MC, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. • Department of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, Erasmus MC, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. E: c.navis@erasmusmc.nl	Cindy Navis has been working at the Sophia Children's Hospital - Erasmus MC since 2011, where she has specialized in feeding problems and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for children with multiple disabilities. As an experienced professional, she is part of the ENCORE expertise teams, collaborating closely with multidisciplinary teams to optimize care for children with complex conditions. Her dedication to improving the quality of life for children with complex care needs is at the heart of her professional commitment.	