



Becoming FEES trained in CA

~4 things to consider~

Have you struggled to understand the confusing regulations around completing FEES competency training in California? I have spent countless hours working through all the legal language on my own and with attorneys. SLPs ask me all the time how to gain FEES competency in CA, so I thought I would break it down for you as best I can. See below for my top 4 tips to getting started on the road to FEES competency. Most of these tips work for FEES competency anywhere, but some are specific to CA.

*I am not an attorney, nor do I have any legal training. This is just based off of my experience in becoming FEES trained myself, FEES training in various hospitals I have worked at, building a FEES program for a hospital, building my mobile FEES business and training other SLPs.

- 1. Find a SLP FEES Mentor:** Taking all the FEES courses can only take you so far. What you need is a mentor who can help take what you have learned in courses and turn it into action. Here are a few things I would look for in a mentor.
 - At least 2 years of practicing FEES or has completed at least 200 FEES.
 - Clinician continues to complete FEES on a regular basis. At least 1-2 FEES per week
 - Clinician is well versed in Evidence Based Practice: up to date research, clinical expertise and patient values.
- 2. Build a relationship with an ENT:** Find an ENT who works in your facility or in your community, who is an SLP advocate and willing to support your journey to FEES competency. You may want to start this piece of it early on in the process, as you will want to know that you have their support from the very beginning. They don't need to be present for all of your scope passes, though in order to deem you competent they will need to observe you at least once. The observation will likely occur towards the end of your competency training.
- 3. Take a basic FEES course (or 2 or 3!):** Here are a few of my favorites...
 - Evolutionary Education Solutions with Hillary Cooper and Jessica Lasky. This is a great option as it is online. You miss out on getting to practice passing the scope but in place of that you get more of the advanced practice content. Ideally your mentor can help you with practice passes, as long as you have a volunteer nose to practice on.
 - SA Swallow Services with Dr. John Ashford and Michelle Skelley. Veterans in the mobile FEES business, they know their stuff. They make a great team with Dr. A as the researcher and Michelle as the clinical practice expert.
 - Community Care Partners with Dr. Eric Blicher. All around great guy with so much knowledge to share. You will certainly be headed in the right direction learning from him.
- 4. Start Scoping!** With that mentor you found in step 1, start completing practice passes on normal volunteers then moving on to actual patients. California requires at least 25 documented passes in order to be deemed competent, but don't hyper-focus on the number 25. Make sure you feel get enough passes on normal volunteers AND patients to feel confident in your FEES skills.