

## Empowering You: Understanding our Roles and Responsibilities in the Schools

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### What is a Speech-Language Pathologist?

- The professional who engages in
  - clinical services
  - prevention
  - advocacy
  - education
  - administration
  - and research
- in areas of communication and swallowing across the life span from infancy through geriatrics.

ASHA, Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology, 2007

### Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology

- Show areas of professional practice
- Inform others about professional roles and responsibilities of qualified providers
- Support SLPs in the provision of highly-qualified, evidence of research-based services to individuals with communication, feeding, and/or swallowing concerns

### Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology

- Support SLPs in the conduct of dissemination of research
- Guide the educational preparation and professional development of SLPs to provide safe and effective clinical services

### Clinical Practice Target Areas

- Collaboration
- Counseling
- Prevention and wellness
- Screening
- Assessment
- Treatment
- Modalities, technology, and instrumentation
- Population and systems

### Professional Practice Target Areas

- Advocacy and outreach
- Supervision
- Education
- Research

### Leadership Target Areas

- Advocacy
- Supervision and mentorship
- Professional development
- Parent training
- Research

### Types of Settings for SLPs

- Educational Settings
  - Early Intervention Programs
  - Preschool and school-based services
  - Elementary, Middle, and High School
- Medical work settings (~35%)

### Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools

### Critical Roles

- Working across all levels
- Serving a range of disorders
- Ensuring educational relevance
- Providing unique contributions to curriculum
- Highlighting language/literacy
- Providing culturally competent services

### Working Across All Levels

- SLPs provide appropriate speech-language services in Pre-K, elementary, middle, junior high, and high schools with no school level underserved (in some states, infants and toddlers would be inclined in school services)

### Serving a Range of Disorders

- SLPs work with students exhibiting the full range of communication disorders, including those involving language, articulation (speech sound disorders), fluency, voice/resonance, and swallowing where a myriad of etiologies may be involved

### SLP Areas-The Big 9

- Articulation
- Fluency
- Language
- Voice and Resonance
- Social Aspects of Communication
- Cognitive Communication
- Hearing
- Feeding and Swallowing
- Alternative/ Augmentative Communication

### Ensuring Educational Relevance

- The litmus test for roles assumed by SLPs with students with disabilities is whether the disorder has an impact on the education of students.
- Therefore, SLPs address personal, social/emotional, academic, and vocational needs that have an impact on attainment of educational goals

### Providing Unique Contributions to Curriculum

- SLPs provide a distinct set of roles based on their focused expertise in language.
- They offer assistance in addressing the linguistic and metalinguistic foundations of curriculum learning for students with disabilities, as well as other learners who are at risk for school failure, or those who struggle in school settings.

### Highlighting Language/Literacy

- Current research supports the interrelationships across the language processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- SLPs contribute significantly to the literacy achievement of students with communication disorders, as well as other learners who are at risk for school failure, or those who struggle in school settings.

### Language & Literacy

- Positive, significant correlations between oral language development and reading comprehension have been well documented in the literature.
- These correlation demonstrated that language development is key to reading and writing development.
- Phonological and phonemic awareness are the building blocks of literacy. If students cannot read words accurately and fluently, then they will not understand text at a level that is necessary for adequate comprehension to occur.

### Language & Literacy

- SLPs have extensive training and knowledge in the sound system of English
- SLPs are trained to recognize deficits in the sound system that affect language development
- SLPs are trained to address these deficits utilizing a therapeutic approach in order to meet students where they are and teach skills to mastery
- SLPs are the 1<sup>st</sup> line of defense. Children will not develop adequate literacy skills if they do not develop adequate language skills.

## Providing Culturally Competent Services

- SLPs make important contributions to ensure that all students receive quality, culturally competent services.
- SLPs have the expertise to distinguish a language disorder from “something else.”
  - cultural and linguistic differences,
  - socioeconomic factors,
  - lack of adequate education,
  - the process of acquiring the dialect of English used in the schools

## Range of Responsibilities

- Prevention
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Program design
- Data collection and analysis
- Compliance
- Collaboration

## Prevention

- SLPs are integrally involved in the efforts of schools to prevent academic failure in whatever form those initiative may take.
- For example, in Response to Intervention (RTI), SLPs use evidence-based practice (EBP) in prevention approaches.

## Assessment

- SLPs conduct assessments that help to identify students with communication disorders as well as to inform instruction and intervention, consistent with EBP.

## Intervention

- SLPs provide intervention that is appropriate to the age and learning needs of each individual student and is selected through an evidence-based decision-making process.
- Although service delivery models are typically more diverse in the school setting than in other settings, the therapy techniques are clinical in nature when dealing with students with disabilities.

## Program Design

- It is essential that SLPs configure schoolwide programs that employ a continuum of service delivery models in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities, and that they provide services to other students as appropriate.

## Data Collection and Analysis

- SLPs, like all educators, are accountable for student outcomes.
- Therefore, data-based decision making, including gathering and interpreting data with individual students, as well as overall program evaluation are essential responsibilities.

## Compliance

- SLPs are responsible for meeting federal and state mandates as well as local policies in performance of their duties.
- Activities may include Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, Medicaid billing, report writing, and treatment plan/therapy log development.

## Collaboration

- With other school professionals
- With universities
- Within the community
- With families
- With students

## Interprofessional Collaborative Practice

- Interprofessional collaborative practice refers to members of two or more professions engaged in learning with, from, and about each other
- Interprofessional education provides an ability to share skills and knowledge between professions and allows for a better understanding, shared values, and respect for the roles of other school professionals

## With Other School Professionals

- SLPs provide services to support the instructional program at a school. Therefore, SLPs' unique contributions complement and augment those made by other professionals who also have unique perspectives and skills.
- Working collegially with general education teachers who are primarily responsible for curriculum and instruction is essential.

## With Other School Professionals

- SLPs also work closely with reading specialists, literacy coaches, special education teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, school psychologists, audiologists, guidance counselors, and social workers, in addition to others.
- Working with school and district administrators in designing and implementing programs is crucial.

### With Universities

- SLPs form important relationships with universities in which both the SLPs and the universities can benefit from shared knowledge and perspectives.
- Additionally, SLPs can serve as resources for university personnel and the university students whom they teach.

### Within the Community

- SLPs work with a variety of individuals and agencies (e.g., physicians, private therapy practitioners, social service agencies, private schools, and vocational rehabilitation) who may be involved in teaching or providing services to children and youth.

### With Families

- For students of all ages it is essential that SLPs engage families in planning, decision making, and program implementation.

### With Students

- Student involvement in the intervention process is essential to promoting personal responsibility and ownership of communication improvement goals.
- SLPs actively engage students in goal planning, intervention implementation, monitoring of progress, and self-advocacy appropriate to age and ability level.

### Roles and Responsibilities of School-Based Speech-Language Pathologists

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|--|--------------------------------|
| • Working across all levels                    | • Prevention                   |
| • Serving a range of disorders                 | • Assessment                   |
| • Ensuring educational relevance               | • Intervention                 |
| • Providing unique contributions to curriculum | • Program design               |
| • Highlighting language/literacy               | • Data collection and analysis |
| • Providing culturally competent services      | • Compliance                   |
|  | • Collaboration                |

If you would like help in presenting your Roles and Responsibilities to your school or help ArkSHA by serving on the upcoming School Stipend AdHoc Committee, please contact me at either:

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