


## Roles and Responsibilities Reflection Tool

From the *Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools* Position Statement and Professional Issues Statement (2010)-[www.asha.org/policy](http://www.asha.org/policy)  
Ad Hoc Committee on the Roles and Responsibilities of the School-Based Speech-Language Pathologists

Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools	Self-Reflection		Next Steps
	Going Great	Need Help	
<b>Critical Roles</b> – <i>SLPs have integral roles in education and are essential members of school faculties.</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Working across All Levels</b> – SLPs provide appropriate speech-language services in Pre-K, elementary, middle, junior high, and high schools with no school level underserved. (Note: In some states infants and toddlers would be included in school services.)</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Serving a Range of Disorders</b> – As delineated in the ASHA scope of practice and federal regulations, SLPs work with students exhibiting the full range of communication disorders, including language, articulation (speech sound disorders), fluency, voice/resonance, and swallowing. Myriad etiologies may be involved.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ensuring Educational Relevance</b> – 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.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Providing Unique Contributions to Curriculum</b> – SLPs provide a distinctive 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 or those who struggle in school settings.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Highlighting Language/Literacy</b>– 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 or those who struggle in school settings.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Addressing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity</b> – SLPs have important contributions to make in addressing the existing and ever-increasing diversity in the schools. They have expertise to distinguish <i>language difference</i> from <i>language disorder</i>, which facilitates more appropriate identification of student needs. They can also address the impact of language differences and second language acquisition on student learning and provide assistance to teachers in promoting educational growth.</li> </ul>			

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<b>Range of Responsibilities</b> – <i>SLPs help students meet the performance standards of a particular school district and state.</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prevention</b> – SLPs are integrally involved in the efforts of schools to prevent academic failure in whatever form those initiatives may take; for example, in Response to Intervention (RTI). SLPs utilize evidence-based practice (EBP) in prevention approaches.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assessment</b> – SLPs conduct assessments in collaboration with others that help to identify students with communication disorders as well as to inform instruction and intervention, consistent with EBP.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Intervention</b> – 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.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program Design</b> – It is essential that SLPs configure school-wide 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.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data Collection and Analysis</b> – 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.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Compliance</b> – SLPs are responsible to meet 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.</li> </ul>			
<b>Collaboration</b> – <i>SLPs work in partnership with others to meet students' needs.</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>With Other School Professionals</b> – 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. SLPs also work closely with reading specialists, literacy coaches, special education teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, school psychologists, audiologists, guidance counselors and social workers. Working with school and district administrators in designing and implementing programs is also crucial.</li> </ul>			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>With Universities</b> –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.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Within the Community</b> –SLPs work with a variety of individuals and agencies who may be involved in teaching or providing services to children and youth; for example, physicians, private therapy practitioners, social service agencies, private schools, and Vocational Rehabilitation.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>With Families</b> – For students of all ages it is essential that SLPs engage families in planning, decision making, and program implementation.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>With Students</b> – Student involvement in the therapeutic 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.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Leadership</b> – <i>SLPs provide direction in defining their roles and responsibilities and in ensuring appropriate services to students.</i></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Advocacy</b> – To assume productive roles SLPs must advocate for appropriate programs and services for children and adolescents, including reasonable workloads, professional development opportunities and other program supports. Because some of the roles SLPs assume may be new or evolving and may not be clearly understood by others, SLPs have a responsibility to articulate their roles and responsibilities to teachers, other school professionals, administrators, support personnel, families, and the community. They also work to influence the development and interpretation of laws, regulations and policies to promote best practice.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Supervision and Mentorship</b> – SLPs play a vital role in inducting new professionals. They are involved with supervising student SLPs and clinical fellows as well as in mentoring new SLPs. They also may supervise paraprofessionals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professional Development</b> – SLPs are valuable resources in designing and conducting professional development, Given their expertise in communication and language, SLPs have much to offer other educators, including administrators, teachers, other educational specialists and paraprofessionals, in the collaborative effort to enhance the performance of students in schools.</li> </ul>			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parent Training</b> – SLPs are in a position to provide training to parents of students of all ages with regard to communication development and disorders. They may be especially helpful to families in creating a language and literacy- rich environment.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research</b> – Federal law requires the use of scientific, research based practices. It is important for SLPs in the schools to participate in research to generate and support the use of evidence-based assessment and intervention practices.</li> </ul>			
<b>To implement these roles and responsibilities ASHA considers the factors listed below to be essential.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Role and Responsibility Realignment</b> – The current educational context for speech-language services requires reflection on and a possible realignment of existing roles and responsibilities in order to make maximum use of the SLPs’ expertise. SLPs and school systems can then carve out a set of roles and responsibilities that is both manageable and efficacious for the diverse student body in today’s schools. Establishing workload priorities is crucial. Further, these roles and responsibilities should be viewed in the larger context of the array of programs and services provided to students, including those with disabilities, and in light of the responsibility for student achievement that all educators share.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reasonable Workloads</b> – For SLPs to be productive in the many roles and responsibilities for which their expertise prepares them, they must have reasonable workloads. Therefore, school systems and SLPs themselves must make ethical and judicious decisions, consistent with legal mandates, about the services they provide. They must balance their scope of work to use their expertise most effectively and efficiently. New or expanded roles cannot merely be additions to an already full workload.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professional Preparation</b> – SLPs must be fully prepared to meet the needs of the diverse student body they will be called upon to serve in the myriad roles and responsibilities outlined in this document. The range and complexity of student problems require at a minimum well-prepared, master’s level professionals with a strong knowledge base in speech-language/literacy development and speech-language/literacy disorder, as well as a strong skill set in diagnosis, intervention, and workload management at the pre-service level. New or expanded roles may require high quality professional development for SLPs already in the schools.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lifelong Learning</b> – To keep abreast of changes in education and speech-language pathology, it is essential that SLPs seek out continuing education experiences to update their knowledge base and hone their skills.</li> </ul>			