



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

Schools Survey Report: SLP Caseload Characteristics Trends 1995–2010

AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION

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Introduction

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted the 2010 Schools Survey to gather information about professional issues related to school-based services. Results from this survey are presented in a series of reports, including this report on speech-language pathologist (SLP) caseload characteristics trends.

Findings from the 1995, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008 ASHA Schools Surveys and the 1995, 1997, and 2000 ASHA Omnibus Surveys are also included in this report for comparative purposes.

Survey Report Highlights

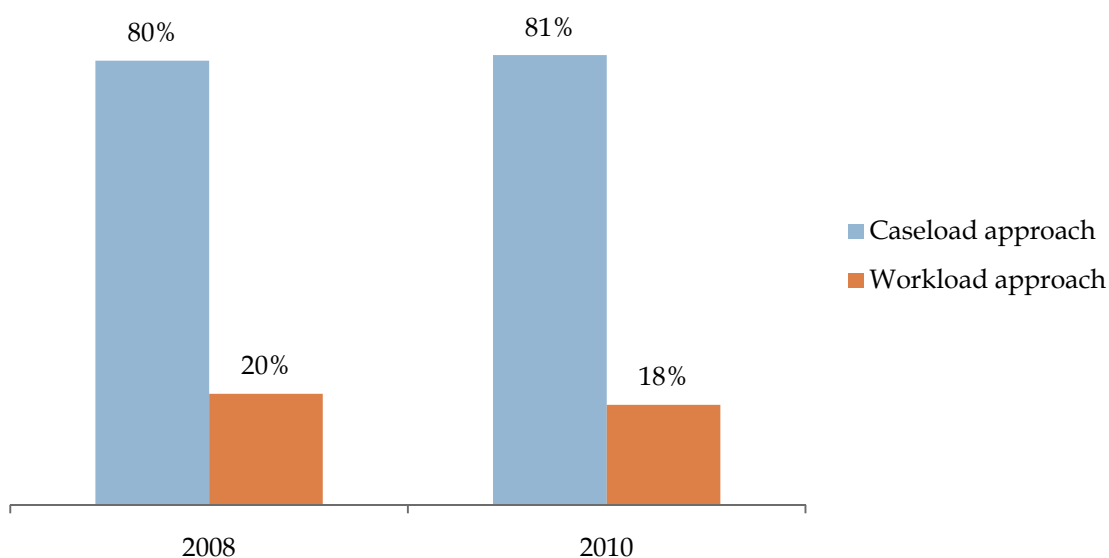
- In 2008 and 2010, the majority (80%–81%) of SLPs indicated that a caseload approach, as opposed to a workload approach, was used to determine the number of students they served.
- From 1995 to 2010, SLPs had a median monthly caseload size of 50 (48 in 2000).
- From 1995 to 2010, caseload size was lower in special day or residential schools (23–32) and preschools (30–40) than in other school settings.
- From 2000 to 2010, SLPs in Indiana had the largest median monthly caseload size (74–80). Those in North Dakota typically had the smallest or among the smallest (32–35).
- From 1995 to 2010, SLPs identified nearly half (42%–49%) of their typical monthly caseload as moderately impaired.
- From 2004 to 2010, more than half (55%–63%) of the typical monthly caseload of SLPs employed in day or residential schools was identified as severely or profoundly impaired.
- From 2000 to 2010, 91% or more of SLPs served students in the area of articulation/phonological disorders.
- From 2000 to 2010, SLPs served a higher average (mean) number of students in their typical monthly caseload with articulation/phonological disorders, language impairments, and learning disabilities than with other disorders.
- From 2000 to 2010, SLPs spent more time each week (about 24 hours) in direct intervention than in any other type of work activity.
- In 2008, nearly half (45%) of SLPs reported having no English language learner (ELL) students; in 2010, 40% reported the same. Of those who did, the median number of ELL students in their typical monthly caseload was two in 2008 and three in 2010.

Caseload or Workload Approach

A caseload approach is based only on the number of students served; a workload approach is based on the number of students served plus additional responsibilities.

In 2008 and 2010, the majority of school-based SLPs indicated that a caseload approach was used to determine the number of students they served (80% and 81%, respectively; see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Which approach is used to determine the number of students you serve?



Note. In 2008, analysis was limited to clinical service providers employed full-time; in 2010, it included providers employed full-time and part-time. Also, in 2010, 1% of survey respondents indicated that this question was not applicable to them because they did not serve students.

n = 1,733 (2008); *n* = 2,171 (2010)

Source. 2008 and 2010 ASHA Schools Surveys

Caseload Size

From 1995 to 2010, school-based SLPs had a median monthly caseload size of 50 (48 in 2000). In other words, they personally treated an average of about 50 different students in a typical month.

Caseload Size by School Setting

Caseload size varied considerably by school setting. From 1995 to 2010, caseload size was lower in special day or residential schools and preschools than in other school settings (23 to 32 for special day or residential schools and 30 to 40 for preschools; see Table 1).

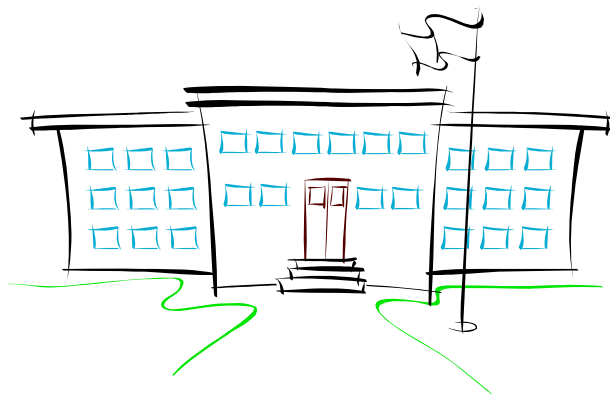
Table 1. What is your average monthly caseload?

| School Setting | 1995 | 1997 | 2000 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Overall | 50 | 50 | 48 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| Special day or residential school | 32 | 30 | 23 | 25 | 27 | 28 | 28 |
| Preschool | 30 | 35 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| Elementary school | 56 | 55 | 50 | 52 | 52 | 50 | 50 |
| Secondary school | 44 | 45 | 48 | 50 | 55 | 49 | 50 |
| Combination of the above school settings | 60 | 55 | 48 | 50 | 55 | 50 | 50 |
| Other | — | — | — | 32 | — | — | — |

Note. “Overall” includes respondents who did not indicate a school setting. Dash indicates that item was not included in survey analysis.

n = 511 (1995); *n* ≤ 594 (1997); *n* ≤ 519 (2000); *n* = 2,052 (2004); *n* = 1,772 (2006); *n* = 1,721 (2008); *n* = 1,734 (2010)

Source. 1995, 1997, and 2000 ASHA Omnibus Surveys and 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 ASHA Schools Surveys



Caseload Size by State

Caseload size varied considerably by state. School-based SLPs in Indiana had the largest median monthly caseload size (74–80) from 2000 to 2010. Those in North Dakota typically had the smallest or among the smallest (32–35; see Table 2).

Table 2. Median monthly caseload size of school-based SLPs by state.

| State | 2000 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | State | 2000 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| AK | 55 | - | - | - | 49 | MT | 50 | - | 45 | 43 | 45 |
| AL | 50 | - | 50 | - | - | NC | 55 | 45 | 56 | 50 | 47 |
| AR | 48 | 40 | 41 | 40 | 40 | ND | 32 | - | 32 | 33 | 35 |
| AZ | 55 | 54 | 55 | 57 | 60 | NE | 50 | - | 54 | 53 | 55 |
| CA | 60 | 58 | 58 | 55 | 55 | NH | 40 | - | - | - | 31 |
| CO | 60 | 48 | - | 48 | - | NJ | 55 | 48 | 46 | 42 | 40 |
| CT | 47 | 42 | 40 | 37 | 40 | NM | 44 | 35 | 40 | 35 | 45 |
| DC | - | - | - | - | - | NV | 60 | - | 55 | - | 60 |
| DE | - | - | 50 | 55 | 54 | NY | 50 | 35 | 40 | 40 | 32 |
| FL | 64 | 72 | 65 | 46 | 65 | OH | 60 | 55 | 60 | 60 | 61 |
| GA | 55 | 50 | 46 | 43 | 46 | OK | 55 | 52 | 54 | 55 | 50 |
| HI | 50 | - | 35 | 40 | 40 | OR | 56 | - | 60 | - | 50 |
| IA | 45 | 50 | 49 | 55 | 50 | PA | 60 | 60 | 53 | 53 | 60 |
| ID | 60 | - | 57 | 61 | 58 | RI | 55 | - | - | - | - |
| IL | 60 | 50 | 55 | 50 | 50 | SC | 60 | 58 | 55 | - | 48 |
| IN | 75 | 74 | 78 | 75 | 80 | SD | - | - | 49 | 40 | - |
| KS | 47 | 47 | - | 46 | 45 | TN | 59 | - | 61 | 57 | 60 |
| KY | 62 | 63 | 60 | 65 | 59 | TX | 60 | 55 | 55 | 50 | 50 |
| LA | 48 | 50 | - | 45 | 46 | UT | 61 | - | - | 65 | 60 |
| MA | 50 | 45 | 40 | 40 | 43 | VA | 55 | 55 | 55 | 55 | 56 |
| MD | 60 | 50 | 52 | 45 | 43 | VT | 40 | - | 30 | - | 31 |
| ME | 45 | - | - | - | 30 | WA | 57 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 |
| MI | 55 | 57 | 57 | 55 | 60 | WI | 37 | 38 | 40 | 40 | 38 |
| MN | 40 | 42 | 45 | 45 | 42 | WV | 50 | - | 50 | 50 | 49 |
| MO | 50 | 45 | 42 | 48 | 45 | WY | 47 | - | 50 | 45 | - |
| MS | 58 | 55 | 55 | 50 | 45 | | | | | | |

Note: Table contains median caseload sizes for states where 25 or more SLPs responded to the survey.

n = 2,067 (2000); *n* = 2,067 (2004); *n* = 1,742 (2006); *n* = 1,707 (2008); *n* = 1,785 (2010)

Source. 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 ASHA Schools Surveys

Degree of Communication Impairment

From 1995 to 2010, school-based SLPs identified nearly half (42%–49%) of their monthly caseload as moderately impaired, nearly a third (26%–31%) as mildly impaired, nearly a quarter (18%–22%) as severely or profoundly impaired, and few students in their caseload (4%–5%) as not impaired or non-IEP (individualized education program), RTI (response to intervention), or Section 504 (see Table 3).

Table 3. Approximately what percentage of students in your typical monthly caseload are in each of the following categories?

| Degree of Impairment | 1995 | 2000 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Severely impaired | 21% | 18% | 20% | 21% | 21% | 22% |
| Moderately impaired | 49% | 49% | 44% | 45% | 45% | 42% |
| Mildly impaired | 26% | 28% | 30% | 30% | 29% | 31% |
| Not impaired | 4% | 5% | 5% | 5% | — | — |
| Non IEP, RTI, or 504 | — | — | — | — | 5% | 5% |

Note. Respondents used their state’s or school district’s definition of degree of communication impairment. Dash indicates that item was not included in survey.

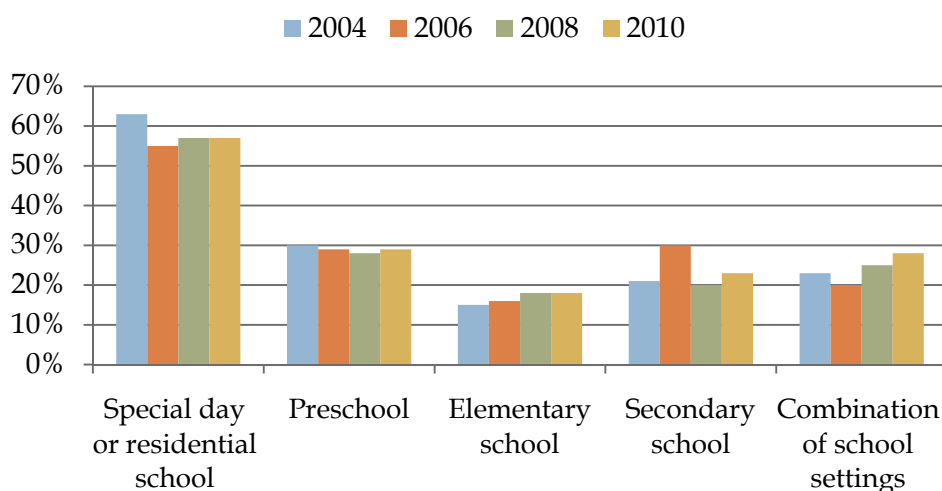
n ≥ 883 (1995); *n* = 1,931 (2000); *n* = 2,099 (2004); *n* = 1,667 (2006); *n* = 1,578 (2008); *n* = 1,661 (2010)

Source. 1995, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 ASHA Schools Surveys

Degree of Communication Impairment in Special Day or Residential Schools

From 2004 to 2010, more than half (55%–63%) of the typical monthly caseload of SLPs employed in day or residential schools was identified as severely or profoundly impaired (a much higher range than in other school settings; see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Approximately what percentage of individuals in your typical monthly caseload are severely or profoundly impaired?



n = 2,099 (2004); *n* = 1,667 (2006); *n* = 1,578 (2008); *n* = 1,661 (2010)

Source. 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 ASHA Schools Surveys

Areas of Intervention

School-based SLPs serve students in numerous areas of intervention. From 2000 to 2010, 91% or more served students in the area of articulation/phonological disorders, 80% or more served students with autism spectrum disorders, and 67% or more served students with fluency disorders (see Table 4).

Table 4. Percentage of school-based SLPs serving students in areas of intervention.

| Area of Intervention | 2000 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| ADHD | 90% | 71% | 66% | 61% | — |
| Aphasia | 11% | — | — | — | — |
| Articulation/phonological disorders | 97% | 93% | 91% | 94% | 92% |
| Auditory processing disorders | — | 67% | 61% | 54% | 47% |
| Autism spectrum disorders, including pervasive developmental disorder and Asperger's ^a | 83% | 80% | 84% | 84% | 88% |
| Childhood apraxia of speech ^b | — | 60% | 56% | 58% | 59% |
| Cognitive communication disorders | 68% | 52% | — | — | — |
| Cognitive impairment/developmental disability | — | — | — | — | 76% |
| Communication effectiveness | — | 3% | 2% | 2% | — |
| Dysphagia (swallowing) | 21% | 12% | 10% | 9% | 9% |
| English language learners | — | — | 35% | — | — |
| Fluency disorders | 80% | 70% | 69% | 67% | 67% |
| Hearing disorders | 66% | 49% | 48% | 44% | 46% |
| Language impairment | 85% | 57% | 61% | 92% | 90% |
| Learning disabilities | 92% | 75% | 73% | 63% | 65% |
| Mental retardation/developmental disability | 90% | 74% | 71% | 66% | — |
| Motor speech disorders (dysarthria, apraxia) ^c | 78% | — | — | — | — |
| Myofunctional disorders | 21% | 13% | — | — | — |
| Nonverbal, augmentative/alternative communication | 62% | 49% | 50% | 45% | 53% |
| Pragmatics/social communication | — | 76% | 77% | 75% | 81% |
| Reading and writing (literacy) | — | 40% | 37% | 32% | 32% |
| Selective mutism | — | — | — | — | 16% |
| Traumatic brain injury | — | 19% | 18% | 14% | 17% |
| Voice/resonance | — | 32% | 29% | 24% | 23% |

Note. Dash indicates that item was not included in survey.

^aFrom 2000 to 2008, this item was "Autism/pervasive developmental disorder."

^bSee also "Motor speech disorders (dysarthria, apraxia)."

^cSee also "Childhood apraxia of speech."

n = 809 (2000); *n* = 2,051 (2004); *n* = 1,769 (2006); *n* = 1,718 (2008); *n* = 1,747 (2010)

Source. 2000 ASHA Omnibus Survey and 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 ASHA Schools Surveys

From 2000 to 2010, school-based SLPs served a higher average (mean) number of students in their monthly caseload with articulation/phonological disorders, language impairments, and learning disabilities than with other disorders (e.g., dysphagia and fluency and hearing disorders; see Table 5).

Table 5. Indicate how many students you serve in a typical month in each of the following areas.

| Area of Intervention | 2000 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| ADHD | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | — |
| Aphasia | 3 | — | — | — | — |
| Articulation/phonological disorders | 24 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 21 |
| Auditory processing disorders | — | 9 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| Autism spectrum disorders, including pervasive developmental disorder and Asperger's ^a | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Childhood apraxia of speech ^b | — | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Cognitive communication disorders | 8 | 11 | — | — | — |
| Cognitive impairment/developmental disability | — | — | — | — | 11 |
| Communication effectiveness | — | 3 | 6 | 3 | — |
| Dysphagia (swallowing) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| English language learners | — | — | 8 | — | — |
| Fluency disorders | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Hearing disorders | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Language impairment | 15 | 17 | 18 | 23 | 24 |
| Learning disabilities | 15 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 16 |
| Mental retardation/developmental disability | 9 | 9 | 10 | 8 | — |
| Motor speech disorders (dysarthria, apraxia) ^c | 4 | — | — | — | — |
| Myofunctional disorders | 4 | 4 | — | — | — |
| Nonverbal, augmentative/alternative communication | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Pragmatics/social communication | — | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Reading and writing (literacy) | — | 14 | 15 | 15 | 14 |
| Selective mutism | — | — | — | — | 1 |
| Traumatic brain injury | — | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Voice/resonance | — | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Note. The numbers included in this table are provided by respondents who served students in the areas of intervention listed. The *n* values vary widely because respondents did not serve students in all areas. Dash indicates that the item was not included in survey.

^aFrom 2000–2008, this item was “Autism/pervasive developmental disorder.”

^bSee also “Motor speech disorders (dysarthria, apraxia).”

^cSee also “Childhood apraxia of speech.”

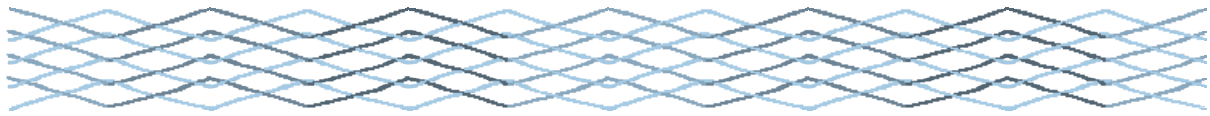
Source. 2000 ASHA Omnibus Survey and 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 ASHA Schools Surveys

Work Activities

Survey respondents were given a list of work activities of SLPs in school settings (e.g., direct intervention, indirect activities such as record keeping, prereferral or RTI activities, and troubleshooting technology). They were then asked to indicate how many hours per week they spent in each activity. From 2000 to 2010, SLPs spent more time each week (about 24 hours) in direct intervention than in any other type of work activity. (These data are not presented in any table.)

English Language Learners (ELLs)

In 2008, nearly half (45%) of school-based SLPs reported having no ELL students; in 2010, 40% reported the same. Of those who did, the median number of ELL students in their typical monthly caseload was two in 2008 and three in 2010. (These data are not presented in any table.)



Data Collection and Survey Response Rates (2010)

The survey was mailed in February 2010 to a random sample of 4,000 ASHA-certified SLPs and 500 ASHA-certified audiologists who were employed in school settings in the United States. Second and third mailings followed, at approximately 3- or 4-week intervals, to individuals who had not responded to earlier mailings.

Of the total sample, 5 had bad mailing addresses, 21 were retired, and 115 were ineligible for other reasons, leaving 4,359 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 2,826, resulting in a 64.8% response rate.

Of the original 4,000 SLPs in the sample, 5 had bad mailing addresses, 17 were retired, and 96 were ineligible for other reasons, leaving 3,882 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 2,544, resulting in a 65.5% response rate. The results presented in this report are based on responses from those 2,544 individuals.

Suggested Citation

This report may be cited as follows:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2010). *Schools Survey report: SLP caseload characteristics trends 1995–2010*. Available from www.asha.org.

Additional Survey Reports

Companion reports are available on the ASHA Web site at www.asha.org/research/memberdata/schoolsurvey/:

- *Survey Summary Report (SLPs)*
- *Survey Summary Report (Educational Audiologists)*
- *Survey Methodology, Respondent Demographics, and Glossary (SLPs)*
- *SLP Caseload Characteristics Report*
- *SLP Annual Salaries and Hourly Wages Report*
- *SLP Salary Trends Report 2004–2010*
- *SLP Workforce and Work Conditions Report*
- *SLP Workforce and Work Conditions Trends Report 2000–2010*

Questions?

For additional information regarding this report or school services generally, please contact Deborah Adamczyk, Director, School Services, at dadamczyk@asha.org or 800-498-2071, ext. 5690. To learn more about how the Association is working on behalf of school-based, ASHA-certified members, visit www.asha.org/slp/schools/.

Acknowledgment

Without the generous cooperation of the members who participate in our surveys, ASHA could not fulfill its mission to provide vital information about the professions and discipline to the Association membership and public. Thank you!