Survey Methodology, Respondent Demographics, and Glossary

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Executive Summary

In the spring of 2006, the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted a survey of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in school settings. The survey was designed to provide information about school-based service delivery and to update and expand information gathered during previous Omnibus and Schools Surveys.

Overall Findings:

- 65% response rate
- 54% employed in elementary schools
- 87%–95% employed as clinical service providers
- Nearly 80% worked full-time
- 44 held doctoral degrees
- Average experience: 14–17 years
- 97% were female
- Average age: 43
- 49% worked in suburban areas
- 3% were Hispanic/Latino
- 6%–17% received an hourly wage

Survey Methodology

Sample Design

The survey was mailed on February 8, 2006, to a random sample of 4,140 ASHA-certified SLPs who were employed in school settings in the United States. Individuals who returned their surveys were removed from second (March 8) and third (April 5) mailings. Each mailing consisted of a personalized cover letter, a numbered survey, and a #10 postage-paid business return envelope inserted into a #11 window envelope with an ASHA return address. Metered postage was at the full, first-class rate. In addition, a reminder postcard was mailed to all sample members on February 15.

Response Rate

Of the original 4,140 SLPs in the sample, 193 were ineligible. The number of respondents was 2,561, resulting in a 64.9% response rate.

Table 1. Calculation of Response Rate

Disposition	Number
Original (gross) sample size	4,140
No longer employed in the field	66
Retired	70
Ineligible for other reasons	57
Net sample size	3,947
Number of respondents	2,561
2,561 / 3,947 = 64.9%	

Experimental Design

All surveys had 34 questions on 25.5" x 11" paper folded to 8.5" x 11" and printed two columns per page. Font was Arial 11. The final page contained a message about the survey and a link to reports from the most recent Schools Survey, as well as a thank-you note and contact information should respondents have questions. A methodological experiment was designed into the survey to test whether a small but timely incentive would have an effect on response rate. Half of the sample received their first survey with 10 2-cent stamps enclosed in the envelope, and half did not. (First-class postage had increased on January 8 by 2 cents.)

Table 2 shows that adding a $.20 incentive increased the response rate by 3%. (Five respondents removed the identification number from their survey so it was not possible to establish whether they

were in the control or experimental group.) Fifteen respondents returned all stamps, unused, with their surveys, and two other respondents each returned two stamps. In addition, 18 respondents returned their surveys in a business return envelope with from 1 to 9 of the incentive stamps affixed as postage, and 22 put all 10 stamps on their business return envelope.

Table 2. Response Rate by Incentive

Disposition	No Stamps	Stamps
Original (gross) sample size	2,070	2,070
No longer employed in the field	34	32
Retired	29	41
Ineligible for other reasons	20	37
Net sample size	1,987	1,960
Number of respondents	1,257	1,299
Response rate	63.3%	66.3%

Data Entry

In order to ensure the highest quality data reasonably possible, each of the 2,561 completed surveys was checked, and erroneous responses were corrected or deleted by the ASHA staff member with primary responsibility for the survey. The forms were then sent to an outside firm for two-pass (key and verify) data entry. This process was completed by May 5.

Demo-graphics

Not only is it typically the case that some individuals who receive a survey do not complete it (unit nonresponse), it is likewise true that some who return theirs do not answer every question (item nonresponse) and thus do not qualify for inclusion in portions of a report. They may be excluded from analyses because they did not answer a question at all or because their answer disqualified them (such as stating that they were employed part-time when a particular analysis was limited to full-time employees). For example, among the 2,561 respondents, only 2,414 were included in reporting on their primary employment facility because they

- indicated that they had ASHA certification in speech-language pathology (CCC-SLP);

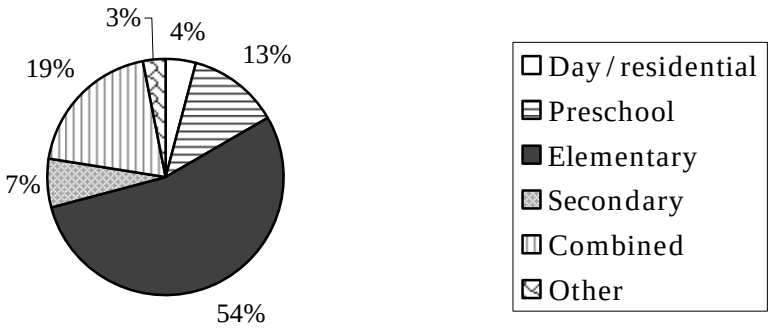
- indicated that they were employed full-time or part-time;
- identified the type of employment facility where they were employed.

As is our practice, we do not report data for cells with fewer than 25 respondents.

Primary Employment Facility

More than half (54%) of the respondents were employed in elementary schools, as shown in Figure 1.

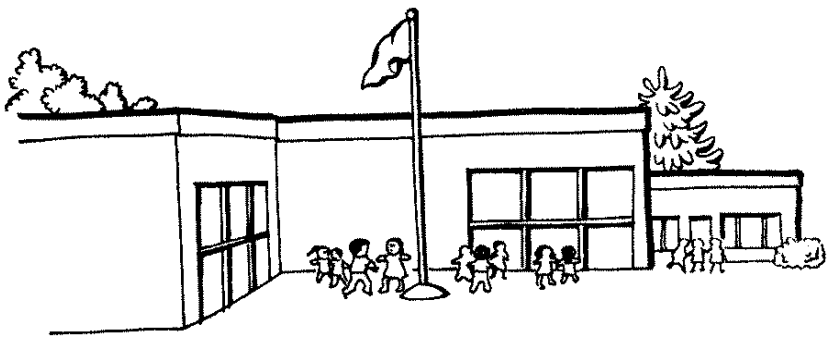
Figure 1. Primary Employment Facility



n = 2,414

Excluding "Other"

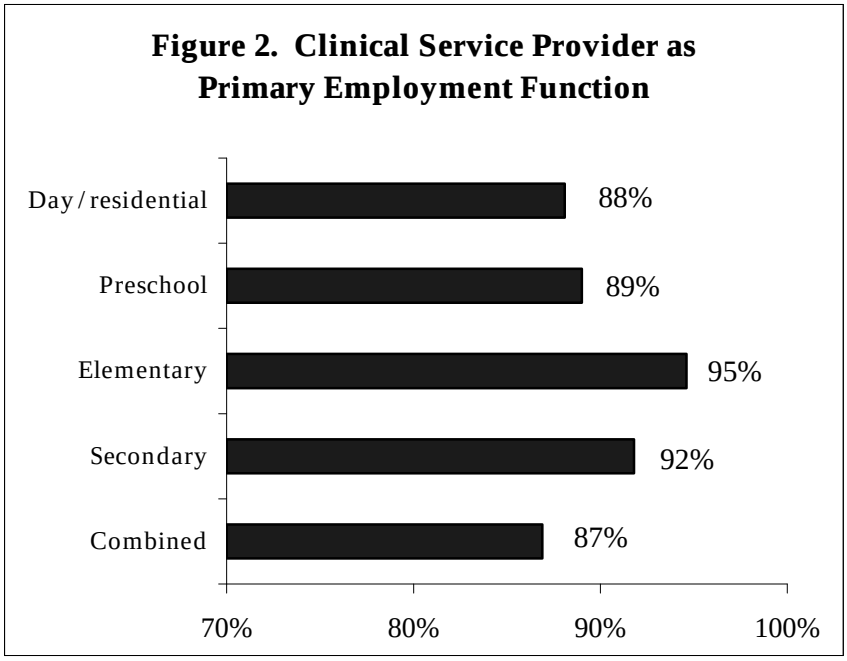
The 76 individuals who work in an "other" type of facility have been included in the 2006 Schools Survey Reports only as part of the "total," not as a separate category of facility because of the ambiguous nature of this small group of individuals. Also included in the "total" is the group of 13 respondents who did not answer the question about their type of facility.



Primary Employment Function

The vast majority of respondents in all types of facilities were clinical service providers (see Figure 2). The highest proportion was in elementary schools (95%) and the lowest in combined school settings (87%). Day or residential schools had a greater percentage of administrators or supervisors (8%) than did the other facilities.

Figure 2. Clinical Service Provider as Primary Employment Function



n = 2,321

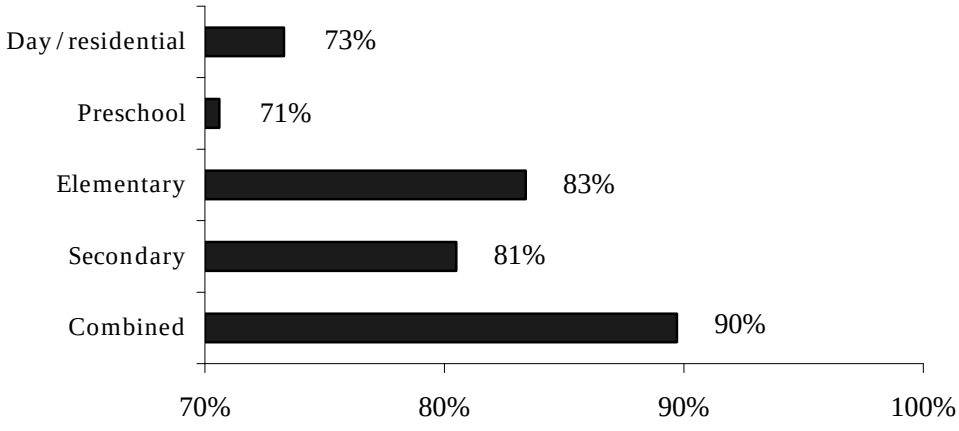
Employment Situation

More than 9 out of every 10 respondents (91%) said that they were salaried employees working either full-time or part-time. Of the remaining, 6% were contract employees, 2% were owners, and the employment situation of the remaining 1% was identified as other.

Employment Status

Nearly 80% of the SLPs in the survey worked full-time, with the highest percentage in combined school settings (90%) and the lowest in preschools (71%; see Figure 3). The average number of hours worked was 38. In addition, between 10% (combined school settings) and 28% (preschools) worked part-time for an average of about 21 hours per week.

Figure 3. Work Full-Time

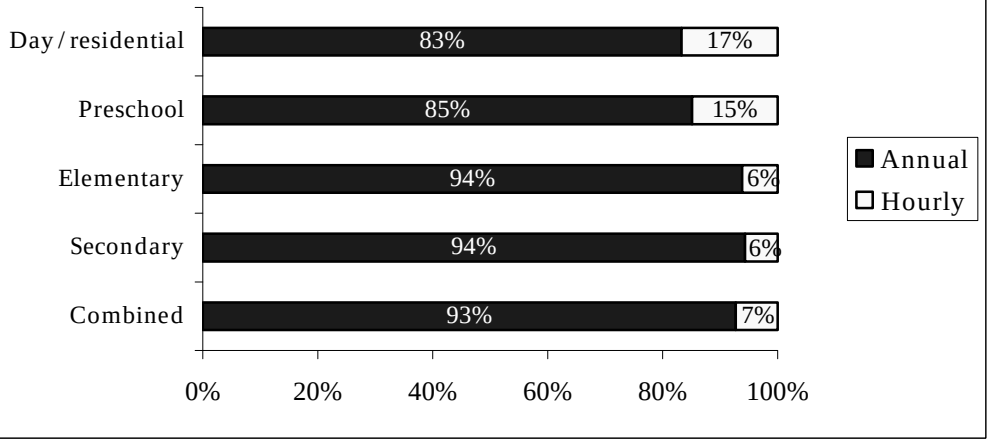


n = 1,930

Salary Basis

Individuals in day / residential or preschool settings were more likely than those in other settings to be paid on an hourly basis (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Salary Basis



n = 2,331

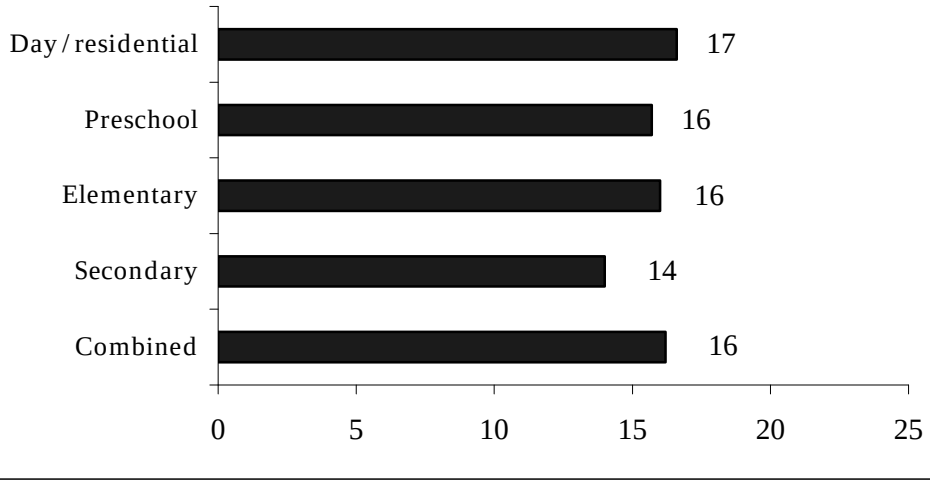
Highest Degree

As a group, fewer than 1% (*n* = 12) of the SLPs reported having received a doctoral degree in the professions, although 44 (2%) had a doctorate when degrees in or out of the professions were measured.

Years of Experience

The number of years of experience averaged about 16. The average (median) was lowest in secondary schools and highest in day / residential schools (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Median Years of Experience

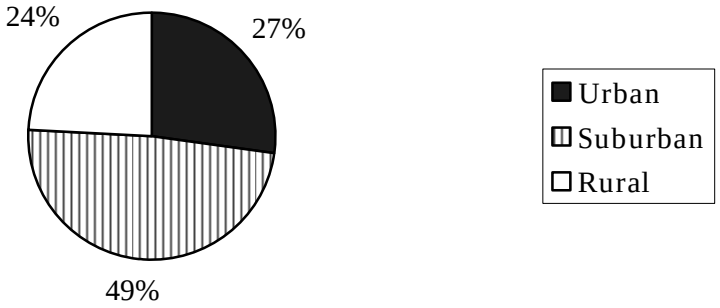


n = 2,344

Population Density

Nearly half of the SLPs who were employed either full-time or part-time worked in a suburban area (see Figure 6). Distribution in metropolitan / urban areas was fairly even across types of schools with a range of 25% of elementary school SLPs to 31% of those in combined school settings. The range in rural settings was larger, however, with 11% of SLPs in both special day / residential and secondary schools working in rural areas but 32% of SLPs in combined school settings being employed in rural areas.

Figure 6. Population Density

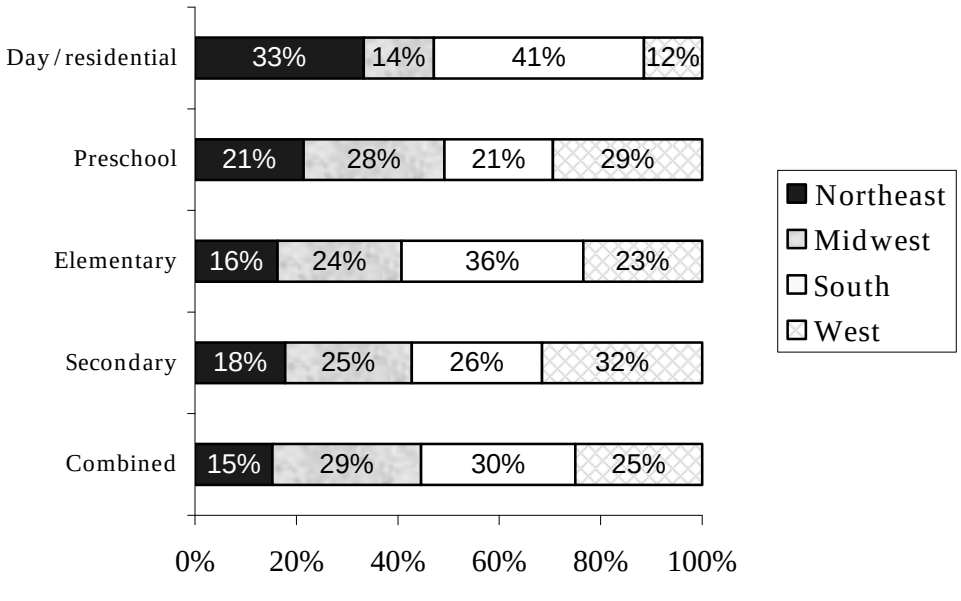


n = 2,402

Geographic Distribution

One third of the SLPs who worked in day or residential schools were employed in the Northeast, and fewer worked in the West (12%) than in any other region (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Employment by Region of the Country



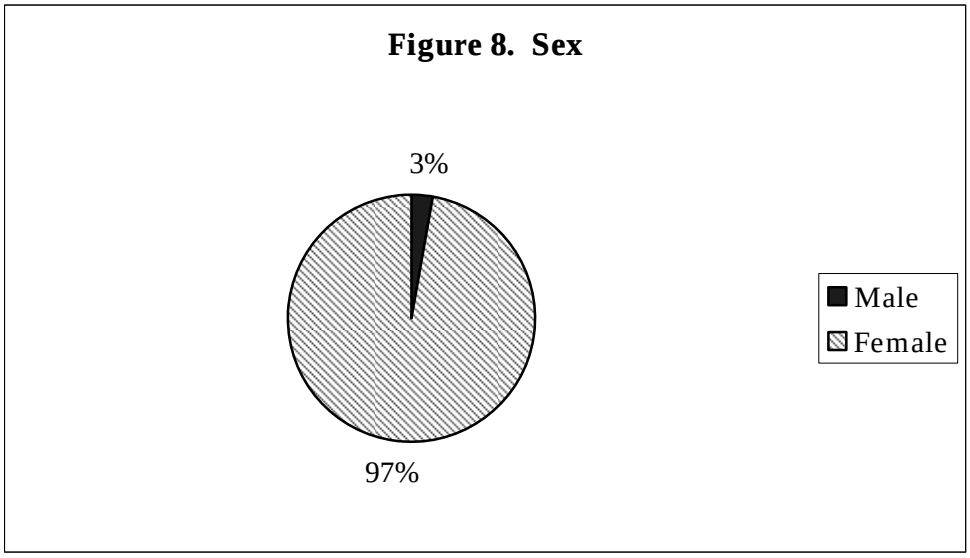
n = 2,337

In elementary schools, more SLPs worked in the South (36%) than in other regions. SLPs in elementary schools, secondary schools, and combined school settings were less likely to work in the Northeast than in other regions.

Sex

The likelihood of SLPs in the schools being male was very low: only 3%, on average (see Figure 8). There was a higher proportion of males working in combined school settings (5%) than in other settings.

Figure 8. Sex



n = 2,559

Age

The mean and median age of the SLPs who participated in the survey was 43. There was more variability across type of school in the mode (the answer that was mentioned more often than any other) than in either the median or mean. The modes ranged from 33 in secondary schools to 53 in preschools.

Ethnicity and Race

The overall percentage of Hispanics / Latinos working in the schools was 3%.

There was a higher proportion of Black or African Americans in day / residential schools (9%) than in any other type of facility. In preschool, elementary, secondary, and combined schools, there were fewer than 4% racial minorities.

Glossary

A glossary of terms used in the 2004 Schools Survey Reports is included.

Types of Facilities

School:
- Special day / residential
- Pre-elementary (preschool)
- Elementary
- Secondary
- Combined schools
- Other

Respondents self-identified their primary employment facility as one of the following types of schools: special day / residential, pre-elementary (preschool), elementary, secondary, combined school settings, or other. Individuals from the "other" category are included when total responses are discussed, but they are not discussed as a separate type of facility because their numbers were fairly small (*n* = 118) and because of the uncertain nature of the category.

Random Sample

A sample of 4,140 ASHA-certified SLPs was randomly selected to participate in this survey. A random sample is a probabilistic sample in which each person has an equal chance of being selected. This is a requirement for generalizing responses from a sample to the broader population from which they were selected.

Response Rate

The response rate was calculated using the following equation:

$$RR = \frac{(C + P)}{S - (Ret + I)}$$

where
- RR = Response rate
- C = Number of completed surveys
- P = Number of partial surveys
- S = Sample size
- Ret = Ineligible because of retirement
- I = Ineligible for other reasons (e.g., does not work in a school, no longer in the field, on leave of absence)

RR = $\frac{2561}{4140 - (70 + 123)} = 64.9\%$

Types of Averages

Mean: Add the total of all the values and divide by *n* (the number of items).

Median: Arrange the values in order, from lowest to highest. Select the value in the middle position.

Mode: The value that occurs more often than any other value

Example: Sample data set

1, 1, 7, 34, 88

Mean: (1 + 1 + 7 + 34 + 88) / 5 = **26.2**

Median: **7**

Mode: **1**

The statistic that is reported as the "average" in the 2006 Schools Survey is the median (middle) statistic unless otherwise noted. Median statistics are presented because they are more stable and less sensitive to extreme values than are means.

Regions of the Country

Northeast

- Middle Atlantic
  - New Jersey
  - New York
  - Pennsylvania
- New England
  - Connecticut
  - Maine
  - Massachusetts
  - New Hampshire
  - Rhode Island
  - Vermont

South

- East South Central
  - Alabama
  - Kentucky
  - Mississippi
  - Tennessee
- South Atlantic
  - Delaware
  - District of Columbia
  - Florida
  - Georgia
  - Maryland
  - North Carolina
  - South Carolina
  - Virginia
  - West Virginia
- West South Central
  - Arkansas
  - Louisiana
  - Oklahoma
  - Texas

Midwest

- East North Central
  - Illinois
  - Indiana
  - Michigan
  - Ohio
  - Wisconsin
- West North Central
  - Iowa
  - Kansas
  - Minnesota
  - Missouri
  - Nebraska
  - North Dakota
  - South Dakota

West

- Mountain
  - Arizona
  - Colorado
  - Idaho
  - Montana
  - Nevada
  - New Mexico
  - Utah
  - Wyoming
- Pacific
  - Alaska
  - California
  - Hawaii
  - Oregon
  - Washington

Other Reports

Results from the 2006 Schools Survey are presented in a series of reports:

- Survey Methodology, Respondent Demographics, and Glossary
- Workforce
- Caseload Characteristics
- Current Issues
- Salaries
- Frequency Report

Suggested Citation

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2006). *2006 Schools Survey report: Methodology, demographics, and glossary*. Rockville, MD: Author.

Supplemental Sources

Agresti, A. & Finlay, B. (1986). *Statistical methods for the social sciences* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Dellen.

Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Additional Information

For additional information regarding the 2006 Schools Survey, please contact Kathleen Whitmire, Director of ASHA's School Services, at 301-897-5700, ext. 4137, kwhitmire@asha.org. To learn more about how the Association is working on behalf of school-based ASHA-certified members, visit ASHA's Web site at http://www.asha.org/members/slp/schools