



AMERICAN  
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-  
HEARING  
ASSOCIATION



# SCHOOLS SURVEY

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## **Survey Report: Caseload Characteristics Trends 1995–2008**

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## **Introduction**

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted the 2008 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 caseload characteristics trends.

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

## **Survey Highlights**

- From 1995 to 2008, overall, speech-language pathologists (SLPs) employed full-time had a median monthly caseload size of 50 (48 in 2000).
- From 1995 to 2008, caseload size was lower in day or residential schools and preschools than in other school settings.
- SLPs from Indiana had the largest median monthly caseload size in 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008 (75, 74, 78, and 75, respectively). Those from North Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin had the lowest.
- From 2000 to 2008, there was little difference in caseload size for SLPs employed in rural areas compared to those employed in suburban and metropolitan or urban areas.
- From 1995 to 2008, SLPs identified nearly half (44%–49%) of their typical monthly caseload as moderately impaired.
- In 2008, as in 2006, 2004, and 2000, the area of intervention in which most SLPs had students was articulation/phonological disorders (94%, 91%, 93%, and 97%, respectively).
- The percentage of SLPs who served students with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) declined substantially from 2000 to 2008 (90% to 61%). The percentage of those who served students with learning disabilities declined considerably as well (92% to 63%).
- From 2000 to 2008, school-based SLPs served a higher average (mean) number of students in their monthly caseload with articulation/phonological disorders, language impairments, learning disabilities, and reading and writing (literacy) difficulties than with other disorders.
- From 2000 to 2008, SLPs spent most of their time each week (21–22 hours) in traditional pull-out service to students.
- In 2008, as in 2006 and 2000, SLPs spent more time each week in direct intervention than in any other type of work activity (24.2, 24.0, and 24.0 hours, respectively).

**Caseload Size**

From 1995 to 2008, school-based SLPs employed full-time had a median monthly caseload size of 50 (48 in 2000).

**By School Setting**

Caseload size varies by school setting. From 1995 to 2008, caseload size was lower in day or residential schools and preschools than in other school settings (see Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
**Median Monthly Caseload Size of SLPs by School Setting,**  
**1995, 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008.**

<b>School Setting</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>
Overall	50	50	48	50	50	50
Day or residential	32	30	23	25	27	28
Preschool	30	35	40	40	40	40
Elementary	56	55	50	52	52	50
Middle, junior high, or secondary	44	45	48	50	55	49
Combined (several)	60	55	48	50	55	50
Other	*	*	*	32	*	*

*Note.* “Overall” includes respondents who did not indicate a school setting.

\*Item not included in survey.

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

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



**By State**

Caseload size varies by state. School-based SLPs from Indiana had the largest median monthly caseload size in 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008 (75, 74, 78, and 75, respectively). Those from North Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin had the lowest (see Table 2).

**Table 2.**  
**Median Monthly Caseload Size of School-Based SLPs by State, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008.**

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

*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)

Source: 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008 ASHA Schools Surveys



**By Type of Community**

From 2000 to 2008, there was little difference in caseload size for SLPs employed in rural areas compared to those employed in suburban and metropolitan or urban areas (see Table 3).

**Table 3.**  
**Median Monthly Caseload Size of School-Based SLPs by Type of Community, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008.**

Type of Community	2000	2004	2006	2008
Rural	51	50	52	50
Suburban	54	50	50	49
Metropolitan/urban	52	50	50	50

*Note.* Type of community was self-defined by respondents (i.e., definitions of the terms “rural,” “suburban,” and “metropolitan/urban” were not provided).

*n* = 2,067 (2000); *n* = 2,583 (2004) *n* = 2,402 (2006); *n* = 1,704 (2008)

Source: 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008 ASHA Schools Surveys

**Degree of Impairment**

In 2008, school-based SLPs identified almost half (45%) of their monthly caseload as moderately impaired (about the same as in past years; see Table 4).

**Table 4.**  
**Mean Degree of Impairment of Caseloads of School-Based SLPs, 1995, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008.**

Degree of Impairment	1995	2000	2004	2006	2008
Severely impaired	21%	18%	20%	21%	21%
<b>Moderately impaired</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>45%</b>
Mildly impaired	26%	28%	30%	30%	29%
Not impaired	4%	5%	5%	5%	*
Non IEP (individualized education program), response to intervention, 504	*	*	*	*	5%

*Note.* Respondents used their state’s or school district’s definition of degree of impairment.

\*Item not included in survey.

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

Source: 1995, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008 ASHA Schools Surveys

**In Day or Residential Schools**

Degree of impairment varies by school setting. In 2008, as in 2006 and 2004, more than half of the typical monthly caseload of SLPs employed in a day or residential school was identified as severely or profoundly impaired (57%, 55%, and 63%, respectively; data not shown in any table).

**Areas of Intervention**

From 2000 to 2008, the area of intervention in which most school-based SLPs had students was articulation/phonological disorders. Only 2% of SLPs served students in the area of communication effectiveness in 2008 (about the same as in past years).

The percentage of SLPs who served students with ADHD declined substantially from 2000 to 2008 (90% to 61%). The percentage of those who served students with learning disabilities declined considerably as well (92% to 63%; see Table 5).

**Table 5.**  
**Percentage of School-Based SLPs Serving Students in Areas of Intervention, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008.**

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

\*Item not included in survey.

\*\*See also “Motor speech disorders (dysarthria, apraxia).”

\*\*\*See also “Childhood apraxia of speech.”

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

From 2000 to 2008, school-based SLPs served a higher average (mean) number of students in their monthly caseload with articulation/phonological disorders, language impairments, learning disabilities, and reading and writing (literacy) difficulties than with other disorders (see Table 6).

**Table 6.**  
**Mean Number of Students Served per Month by School-Based SLPs by Area of Intervention, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008.**

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

\*Item not included in survey.

\*\*See also “Motor speech disorders (dysarthria, apraxia).”

\*\*\*See also “Childhood apraxia of speech.”

*Note.* The numbers included in this table are provided by respondents who served students in the areas of intervention listed. The *n* varies widely because respondents did not serve students in all areas.

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

**Service Delivery Models**

In 2008, as in 2006 and 2000, school-based SLPs spent most of their time each week (about 21 hours) in traditional pull-out service to students (see Table 7).

**Table 7.**  
**Mean Number of Hours Spent per Week by School-Based SLPs Using Service Delivery Models, 2000, 2006, and 2008.**

<b>Service Delivery Model</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>
Classroom-based or curriculum-based	3.5	3.8	4.7
Collaborative consultation	2.8	2.3	2.7
Prereferral or response to intervention activities	*	2.4	*
Resource room	0.7	0.9	1.0
Self-contained classroom	1.1	3.5	3.7
<b>Traditional pull-out service</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>21.9</b>
Other	1.0	*	*

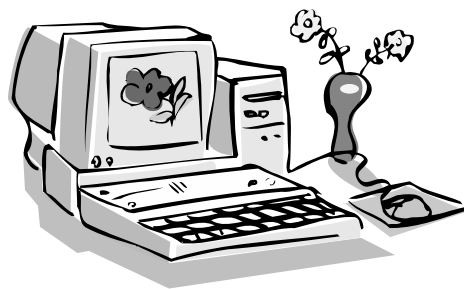
\*Item not included in survey.

*n* = 1,782 (2000); *n* = ≥ 1,045 (2006); *n* = ≤ 1,574 (2008)

Source: 2000, 2006, and 2008 ASHA Schools Surveys

**Work Activities**

In 2008, as in 2006 and 2000, school-based SLPs spent more time each week in direct intervention than in any other type of work activity (24.2, 24.0, and 24.0 hours, respectively; data not shown in any table).



**Survey  
Response Rate  
(2008)**

The 2008 Schools Survey was mailed in February 2008 to a random sample of 4,130 ASHA-certified SLPs 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 original 4,130 SLPs in the sample, 25 were retired, 17 were no longer employed in the field, 5 had bad mailing addresses, and 86 were ineligible for other reasons, leaving 3,997 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 2,556, resulting in a 64% response rate. The results presented in this report are based on responses from those 2,556 individuals.

**Demographics  
(2008)**

On certain characteristics, respondents to the 2008 Schools Survey were an exact representation of the population of ASHA-certified, school-based SLPs from which they were selected. The vast majority of both groups were female (97%–98%), non-Hispanic (97%), and White (95%–96%). Their median ages were nearly identical: 46 in the survey and 47 in the population.

The respondents differed from the population on other characteristics such as the school setting in which they worked. The largest differences were in elementary schools, where 58% of the survey respondents worked compared with 47% in the population, and in combined school settings, where 16% of the survey respondents worked compared with 26% of the population. Among the respondents, 91% were clinical service providers; in the population, 84% reported this role. The respondents had more experience (17 years) than did the population from which they were drawn (10 years).

**Suggested  
Citation**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2008). *Schools Survey report: Caseload characteristics trends, 1995–2008*. Rockville, MD: Author.

**Additional  
Information**

For additional information regarding this report or school services generally, please contact Deborah Adamczyk, Director, School Services, at [dadamczyk@asha.org](mailto: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/members/slp/schools](http://www.asha.org/members/slp/schools).