



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
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ASSOCIATION

SLP Health Care Survey Report:
Caseload Characteristics and Trends
2005–2017

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August 25, 2017

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Introduction

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted the *2017 SLP Health Care Survey* to gather information from speech-language pathologists (SLPs) about the workforce, service provision, earnings, and other professional topics. Results from this survey are presented in a series of reports, including this report on caseload characteristics and trends.

Results from the 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015 *ASHA SLP Health Care Surveys* are included in this report for comparative purposes. Questions and response options differ among surveys; therefore, data on all topics are not available for all survey years.

Survey Report Highlights

Age Groups Served

- In 2017, overall, SLPs spent 60% of their clinical services time with adults—the same or about the same as in past years (54%–60% from 2005 to 2015). They spent 40% of their clinical services time with children (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children), about the same as in past years (39%–47% from 2005 to 2015).
- From 2005 to 2017, SLPs in general medical hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, and skilled nursing facilities spent most of their clinical services time with adults. SLPs in home health care settings, outpatient clinics/offices, and pediatric hospitals spent most of their clinical services time with children.

Pediatric Clinical Services

- From 2015 to 2017, overall, SLPs spent most of their pediatric clinical services time treating children with language and literacy disorders, speech sound disorders, autism spectrum disorder, and swallowing and feeding disorders.
- From 2015 to 2017, SLPs in outpatient clinics/offices spent more of their pediatric clinical services time treating children with autism spectrum disorder than did SLPs in other health care settings.

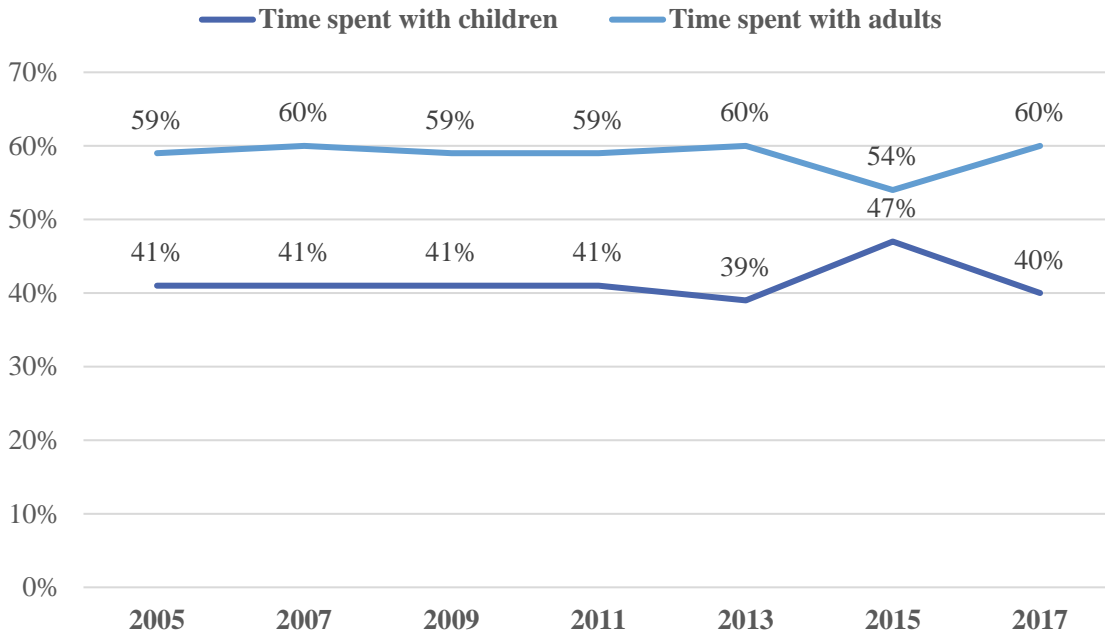
Adult Clinical Services

- From 2009 to 2017, overall, SLPs spent most of their adult clinical services time treating adults with swallowing disorders, aphasia, and dementia.
- From 2005 to 2017, SLPs in general medical hospitals and skilled nursing facilities spent more of their adult clinical services time treating adults with swallowing disorders than did SLPs in other health care settings.
- From 2009 to 2017, SLPs in skilled nursing facilities spent more of their adult clinical services time treating adults with dementia than did SLPs in other health care settings.

Age Groups Served

In 2017, overall, SLPs spent 60% of their clinical services time with adults and 40% with children (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children; see Figure 1 and Appendix Table 1). These figures are largely consistent with those of previous survey years.

Figure 1. *Percentage of clinical services time spent by SLPs with children and adults, by year.*



Note. These data are from the 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 ASHA SLP Health Care Surveys. Because of rounding, percentages may not total exactly 100%.

n = 1,923 (2005); *n* = 2,229 (2007); *n* = 1,897 (2009); *n* = 2,246 (2011); *n* = 1,686 (2013); *n* = 1,526 (2015); *n* = 1,582 (2017).

Age Groups Served, by Health Care Setting

From 2005 to 2017, SLPs in pediatric hospitals spent most of their clinical services time (at least 98%) with children, especially infants and toddlers (see Appendix Table 2). SLPs in outpatient clinics/offices spent most of their clinical services time with children (at least 74%), especially preschoolers and school-age children. SLPs in home health care settings also spent most of their clinical services time (at least 60%) with children, especially infants and toddlers.

From 2005 to 2017, SLPs in skilled nursing facilities spent most of their clinical services time (at least 95%) with adults. SLPs in general medical and rehabilitation hospitals also spent most of their clinical services time (at least 81%) with adults.

Pediatric Clinical Services

From 2015 to 2017, overall, SLPs spent most of their pediatric clinical services time treating children with language and literacy disorders, speech sound disorders, autism spectrum disorder, and swallowing and feeding disorders (see Table 1 and Appendix Table 2 for data from additional survey years).

Table 1. *Of the time that you spend providing pediatric services, approximately what percentage is spent in the following areas? Total must equal 100%.*

Area	%	
	2015 (n = 909)	2017 (n = 780)
Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)	5	6
Autism spectrum disorder	16	17
Cognitive-communication	8	12
Fluency	4	2
Language and literacy ^a	29	21
Speech sound disorders ^b	22	21
Swallowing and feeding	13	16
Voice/resonance	2	3
Other	1	2

Note. These data are from the 2015 and 2017 ASHA SLP Health Care Surveys. Because of rounding, percentages may not total exactly 100%. ^aIn 2015, this item was titled “Language.” ^bIn 2015, this item was titled “Articulation–phonology.”

Pediatric Clinical Services, by Health Care Setting

From 2015 to 2017:

- SLPs in general medical hospitals spent most of their pediatric clinical services time treating children with swallowing and feeding disorders (at least 23%), speech sound disorders (at least 19%), and language and literacy disorders (at least 16%).
- SLPs in home health care settings spent most of their pediatric clinical services time treating children with language and literacy disorders (at least 23%), speech sound disorders (at least 19%), and autism spectrum disorder (at least 15%).
- SLPs in outpatient clinics/offices spent most of their pediatric clinical services time treating children with speech sound disorders (24%), language and literacy disorders (at least 23%), and autism spectrum disorder (20%).
- SLPs in pediatric hospitals spent most of their pediatric clinical services time treating children with swallowing and feeding disorders (at least 31%), language and literacy disorders (at least 13%), speech sound disorders (at least 12%), and autism spectrum disorder (at least 10%).

These data are not presented in any table.

Adult Clinical Services

From 2009 to 2017, overall, SLPs spent most of their adult clinical services time treating adults with swallowing disorders, aphasia, and dementia (see Table 2 and Appendix Table 3 for data from additional survey years).

Table 2. *Of the time that you spend providing adult services, approximately what percentage is spent in the following areas? Total must equal 100%.*

Area	%				
	2009 (n = 1,279)	2011 (n = 1,528)	2013 (n = 1,148)	2015 (n = 970)	2017 (n = 1,074)
Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)	—	3	3	4	3
Accent modification/communication effectiveness	1	1	1	1	< 1
Aphasia	17	17	16	16	14
Dementia	11	13	15	13	15
Traumatic brain injury (TBI)	8	8	8	8	8
Other cognitive-communication disorder	3	3	2	3	6
Motor speech	7	7	7	8	7
Swallowing	45	42	42	41	39
Voice/resonance	6	5	6	5	6
Other	2	2	2	1	2

Note. These data are from the 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 ASHA SLP Health Care Surveys. Dash indicates that the item was not included in the survey. Because of rounding, percentages may not total exactly 100%.

Adult Clinical Services, by Health Care Setting

From 2009 to 2017:

- SLPs in general medical hospitals spent most of their adult clinical services time treating adults with swallowing disorders (at least 55%).
- SLPs in home health care settings spent most of their adult clinical services time treating adults with swallowing disorders (at least 35%), aphasia (at least 16%), and dementia (at least 11%).
- SLPs in outpatient clinics/offices spent most of their adult clinical services time treating adults with swallowing disorders (at least 17%), aphasia (at least 17%), TBI (at least 11%), and voice/resonance disorders (at least 11%).
- SLPs in rehabilitation hospitals spent most of their adult clinical services time treating adults with swallowing disorders (at least 28%), aphasia (at least 19%), and TBI (at least 17%).
- SLPs in skilled nursing facilities spent most of their adult clinical services time treating adults with swallowing disorders (at least 42%) and dementia (at least 21%).

These data are not presented in any table.

Survey Methodology

The survey was sent in February 2017 to a random sample of 4,000 ASHA-certified SLPs who were employed in health care facilities in the United States. The sample was stratified by type of facility and by private practice. Of this group, 1,500 SLPs were assigned to a control group to receive the survey via postal mail. They also received a survey pre-notification e-mail at the time of the first postal mailing. Second (March) and third (April) postal mailings followed, at approximately 3- or 4-week intervals. An e-mail with a link to a web-based survey was sent in May to those who had not yet responded. The 2,500 SLPs assigned to an experimental group were sent up to four e-mails with a link to a web-based survey between February and May, as well as up to two surveys sent via postal mail in March and April.

Because facilities with fewer SLPs, such as pediatric hospitals, were oversampled, ASHA used weighting when presenting survey data.

Response Rates

Of the original 4,000 SLPs in the sample, 11 were retired, seven had incorrect postal mail addresses, 94 were employed in other types of facilities, 13 were not employed in the field, and three were ineligible for other reasons, which left 3,872 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 2,019—a 52.1% response rate. Past *ASHA SLP Health Care Survey* response rates were 54.6% (2005), 63.8% (2007), 54.6% (2009), 62.5% (2011), 53.5% (2013), and 46.9% (2015).

Suggested Citation

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2017). *SLP Health Care Survey report: Caseload characteristics and trends, 2005–2017*. Available from www.asha.org.

Additional Information

Companion survey reports are available on the ASHA website at www.asha.org/Research/memberdata/HealthcareSurvey/.

Questions?

For additional information regarding this report, please contact Janet Brown, director of Health Care Services, at 800-498-2071, ext. 5679 or jbrown@asha.org. To learn more about how the Association is working on behalf of ASHA-certified SLPs in health care settings, visit www.asha.org/slp/healthcare.

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 the public. Thank you!

Appendix: Data Tables



Age Groups Served

Table 1. *Of the time that you spend providing clinical services, approximately what percentage is spent with the following age groups? Total must equal 100%.*

Age group	%						
	Overall	General medical/ VA/LTAC hospital ^a	Home health agency/client's home	Outpatient clinic/office	Pediatric hospital	Rehabilitation hospital	Skilled nursing facility
2017 (<i>n</i> = 1,582)							
Infant–toddler	16	5	41	19	42	2	1
Preschooler	12	3	11	28	30	4	1
School-age child	12	3	8	28	26	5	1
Adult	60	89	40	25	2	89	98
2015 (<i>n</i> = 1,526)							
Infant–toddler	16	4	39	18	40	5	1
Preschooler	16	7	17	30	33	5	2
School-age child	15	5	12	30	26	9	3
Adult	54	85	32	22	1	81	95
2013 (<i>n</i> = 1,686)							
Infant–toddler	15	4	43	15	42	3	< 1
Preschooler	13	4	16	30	32	4	< 1
School-age child	11	3	8	29	25	4	1
Adult	60	89	33	26	1	89	99
2011 (<i>n</i> = 2,031)							
Infant–toddler	17	7	45	18	43	3	1
Preschooler	13	6	16	31	31	5	1
School-age child	11	5	10	29	25	5	1
Adult	59	81	30	23	2	88	98

(Table continues)

Table 1. Continued

Age group	%						
	Overall	General medical/ VA/LTAC hospital ^a	Home health agency/client's home	Outpatient clinic/office	Pediatric hospital	Rehabilitation hospital	Skilled nursing facility
2009 (<i>n</i> = 1,671)							
Infant–toddler	15	6	39	18	46	3	< 1
Preschooler	14	5	14	31	35	3	1
School-age child	12	3	11	31	18	4	1
Adult	59	86	37	21	1	89	98
2007 (<i>n</i> = 1,960)							
Infant–toddler	16	6	52	18	41	1	1
Preschooler	14	6	14	31	33	3	1
School-age child	12	5	8	30	24	5	1
Adult	59	83	25	21	2	91	98
2005 (<i>n</i> = 1,656)							
Infant–toddler	15	6	48	18	39	3	1
Preschooler	15	8	15	31	38	6	1
School-age child	12	6	10	27	22	8	2
Adult	58	81	28	24	1	83	97

Note. These data are from the 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 ASHA SLP Health Care Surveys. Because of rounding, percentages may not total exactly 100%. ^aFrom 2005 to 2011, this item was titled “General medical hospital.” In 2013, it was titled “General medical/long-term acute care (LTAC) hospital.”

Pediatric Clinical Services

Table 2. *Of the time that you spend providing pediatric services, approximately what percentage is spent in the following areas? Total must equal 100%.*

Area	%						
	2005 (n = 1,034)	2007 (n = 1,189)	2009 (n = 955)	2011 (n = 1,149)	2013 (n = 818)	2015 (n = 909)	2017 (n = 780)
AAC	—	—	—	5	5	5	6
Autism spectrum disorder	—	—	—	—	—	16	17
Cognitive-communication	14	14	13	8	8	8	12
Fluency	3	3	3	3	3	4	2
Language and literacy ^a	36	35	37	38	38	29	21
Prevention/wellness	—	1	1	2	1	—	—
Speech sound disorders ^b	25	24	24	26	24	22	21
Swallowing and feeding	16	17	16	15	15	13	16
Voice/resonance	3	3	3	2	3	2	3
Other	3	3	3	2	2	1	2

Note. These data are from the 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 ASHA SLP Health Care Surveys. Dash indicates that the item was not included in the survey. Because of rounding, percentages may not total exactly 100%. ^aFrom 2005 to 2015, this item was titled “Language.” ^bFrom 2005 to 2015, this item was titled “Articulation–phonology.”

Adult Clinical Services

Table 3. *Of the time that you spend providing adult services, approximately what percentage is spent in the following areas? Total must equal 100%.*

Area	%						
	2005 (n = 1,374)	2007 (n = 1,598)	2009 (n = 1,279)	2011 (n = 1,528)	2013 (n = 1,148)	2015 (n = 970)	2017 (n = 1,074)
AAC	—	—	—	3	3	4	3
Accent modification/ communication effectiveness	—	1	1	1	1	1	< 1
Aphasia	17	17	17	17	16	16	14
Cognitive-communication ^a	21	21	—	—	—	—	—
Dementia	—	—	11	13	15	13	15
TBI	—	—	8	8	8	8	8
Other cognitive- communication disorder	—	—	3	3	2	3	6
Motor speech	8	8	7	7	7	8	7
Prevention	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Swallowing	45	46	45	42	42	41	39
Voice/resonance	7	5	6	5	6	5	6
Other	3	2	2	2	2	1	2

Note. These data are from the 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 ASHA SLP Health Care Surveys. Dash indicates that the item was not included in the survey. Because of rounding, percentages may not total exactly 100%. ^aIn 2009, the “Cognitive-communication” category was replaced by the more specific “Dementia,” “TBI,” and “Other cognitive-communication disorder” subcategories under the heading of “Cognitive-communication.”