

# ASHA Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) in Schools DOs and DON'Ts

## *Roles and Responsibilities of SLPs in Schools Working Group*

An **example (DO)** is an instance of role implementation that demonstrates good practice. It's something you want to **do**. A **non-example (DON'T)** is a scenario that typifies inappropriate role implementation but reflects a practice or practices sometimes observed in schools. It's something you **don't** want to do.

Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools	(DOs) (Examples)	DON'Ts (Non-Examples) <i>This column contains examples of inappropriate practices or errors. Please read these <b>non-examples</b> with that perspective.</i>
<b>Critical Roles in Education</b> — <i>SLPs in schools have critical roles in education and are integral members of school faculties.</i>		
<p><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 receive school services.)</p>	<p>The school district is in financial difficulty. One of the solutions discussed is cutting services to the middle schools, because many students are being dismissed at the end of elementary school and there does not appear to be a need for middle school services. Several SLPs speak up and discuss the importance of supporting middle schools with speech-language services.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blanket policies, such as "cutting services for middle school students," violate IDEA regulations.</li> <li>• The SLPs will want to support the school district in ensuring that Individualized Education Program (IEP) services are sufficient to meet the needs of all students, including middle school students.</li> </ul>	<p>An administrator tells the speech-language pathology department that SLPs will no longer be assigned to high schools on a regular basis. An SLP will stop by a high school once a month to check on certain students and address concerns as needed. The SLPs agree that this is a good idea and wise use of resources.</p> <p><b>Why you don't want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By law, a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) is guaranteed to all students with disabilities ages 3–21. School districts cannot categorically deny appropriate services to a whole age group of students.</li> <li>• "Once-a-month" service may not meet the individual needs of all students with IEPs and therefore does not constitute FAPE.</li> <li>• SLPs understand the language needs of</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a critical need for SLPs to be present to address the complex language demands of the middle school curriculum for students who struggle and shed light on how failure to address these demands can contribute to achievement gaps.</li> </ul>	<p>adolescents, recognize the role of language in academic success, and appreciate the negative effects that a language disorder can have on understanding academic language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLPs need to advocate for appropriate services at high schools, including those involving preliminary Response to Intervention (RTI) tiers.</li> <li>• Financial resources cannot dictate the necessity for services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Serving a Range of Disorders</b>—As delineated in the <a href="#">ASHA Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology</a> and federal regulations, SLPs work with students who exhibit the full range of communication disorders, including those involving language, articulation (speech sound disorders), fluency, voice/resonance, and swallowing. Myriad etiologies may be involved.</p>	<p>The SLP’s caseload primarily includes students with a variety of language disorders and a smaller percentage of students who have moderate/severe articulation disorders, and fluency, voice, and swallowing problems that affect educational performance. The SLP implements a variety of service delivery models, including pull-out, in-class, and consultation. Teachers understand the importance of language in curriculum and know when to refer students with potential language-literacy problems for further evaluation.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You would expect most students on a caseload to be served for language disorders.</li> <li>• Because students’ needs vary, the services they receive should vary accordingly. A range of services that relate speech, language, and communication disorders to students’ academic strengths and weaknesses are based on relevant data obtained in various contexts.</li> </ul>	<p>The caseload at Good Elementary School consists of students with a variety of mostly speech problems. The SLP sees only five students for language-based disorders. By now, the SLP is known as the “speech teacher” and never receives invitations to participate in meetings that address any aspect of overall student performance. Colleagues do not associate the SLP’s work with academic performance.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is unlikely that most students who need speech-language services have speech disorders and that only a few need language therapy.</li> <li>• The SLP who sees mainly students with speech disorders is ignoring the population with language/literacy disabilities.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of in-class services and consultation will enhance students' ability to transfer speech-language skills to real-world situations.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Educational Relevance—</b> The litmus test for roles assumed by SLPs in school settings is whether their work has an impact on the education of students. Therefore, SLPs address personal, social, academic, and vocational needs that have an impact on attainment of educational goals.</p>	<p>The principal questions the SLP who is providing in-class services in math class. Raj is one of a number of students who have difficulties completing problems; he does not understand the language within the word problems and therefore cannot set up the problems in order to solve them. The SLP argues for the appropriateness of working with Raj and provides justification based on data that indicate the language demands are a barrier to the students' educational progress.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math word problems include complex vocabulary and sentence structure and, therefore, are clearly within the scope of practice for an SLP to address.</li> <li>• A child's ability to complete mathematical calculations may be masked by his or her inability to comprehend the complex language used in word problems. . Lack of success in math may well be language-related.</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers and the principal assert that Jesse, Shanekwa, and Josh should be on the SLP's caseload. These students make single sound errors that have no negative impact on educational performance. The SLP feels comfortable working on single sound errors with these students and, therefore, recommends their eligibility for speech-language services.</p> <p><b>Why you don't want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In order for a problem to rise to the level of a disability addressed under federal law, the problem must have an adverse educational effect; therefore, educational relevance is a factor in provision of services.</li> <li>• In these cases, single sound articulation errors typically have no adverse educational effect; therefore, speech-language services should not be provided.</li> <li>• The SLP's comfort level should not be the factor that determines eligibility or recommendation for services. All decisions must be made based on the individual needs of the student.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Providing Unique Contributions to Curriculum</b>—SLPs fulfill a distinct 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 for school failure or struggle in school settings.</p>	<p>A well-prepared guidance counselor is providing social skill instruction to a group of students having difficulty with peer interaction. Some of the students have pragmatic language weaknesses that contribute to their social problems. The SLP works with the counselor to develop the social skill lesson plans that the counselor will deliver; the SLP recommends specific activities to incorporate pragmatic language goals. In addition to consulting with the guidance counselor, the SLP works directly with some of the students to increase the intensity of pragmatic language intervention.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a great opportunity to collaborate with another professional with expertise in social skills. The pragmatic underpinnings of social skills require the unique expertise of the SLP; therefore, consultation between the SLP and the guidance counselor enhances, rather than duplicates, services.</li> <li>• The SLP taps her therapeutic expertise by working directly with students who need more intensive intervention on pragmatic language elements, including perspective-taking and metalinguistic elements.</li> </ul>	<p>An SLP goes into a second-grade classroom to help the teacher teach social studies lessons to the students. The class is divided; the SLP instructs half the class.</p> <p><b>Why you don't want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SLP is working in the classroom, which may seem like a good thing, but she is not providing a service that makes use of her unique expertise.</li> <li>• Teaching a social studies lesson is the responsibility of a classroom teacher.</li> <li>• When the SLP provides in-class services, she and the teacher should plan collaboratively to meet the language needs of students while maximizing the training and skill set of each professional.</li> <li>• In this situation, the SLP could have given a lesson to only those students who were having difficulty with the language of the social studies content. However, doing so could disrupt the teacher's instruction to other students. A better time might be when the class is engaged in independent work related to the lesson.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Highlighting Language/Literacy</b>— Current research supports the interrelationships across the language processes of listening, speaking, reading, and</p>	<p><b>1.</b> Volunteers are solicited to work on a summer curriculum project to bring the district's curriculum in line with the Common Core State Standards. An SLP applies to work on the project, because he thinks he can make a significant contribution.</p>	<p><b>1.</b> An evaluation team member asks the SLP to perform a language assessment on a student who is observed to have a reading problem but does not show a severe discrepancy between IQ and reading ability. The SLP declines, stating that she is pressed for time and would not be working with a student on reading anyway.</p>

<p>writing; SLPs are uniquely able to contribute significantly to the literacy achievement of students with communication disorders, as well as other struggling learners.</p>	<p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Common Core State Standards are filled with language expectations rooted in vocabulary, morphology, and syntax, across all grade levels and content areas.</li> <li>• The SLP has valuable expertise to lend to the project due to his background in language.</li> <li>• The SLP’s participation on an important district committee could highlight the profession’s expertise in language and literacy and inform other educators about the roles of SLPs in the schools.</li> </ul> <p>2. A group of fifth graders in Ms. Brown’s class have language impairment (LI) and receive direct speech-language services from Jose, an SLP. He works with the classroom teacher to identify science and social studies vocabulary that the students with LI find challenging. Jose helps Ms. Brown develop a plan to reinforce the words in a vocabulary station in the classroom.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with LI typically have vocabulary gaps that widen as they progress through the grades. By the time they enter fifth grade, they will have gaps that thwart content learning.</li> <li>• They need multiple exposures to vocabulary to attain mastery.</li> <li>• It is the teacher’s job to teach the technical science and vocabulary words associated with the instructional unit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching reading skills is clearly within the scope of practice of the SLP who works with students who struggle with language.</li> <li>• However, if the student has not received basic instruction in reading, addressing the problem might be considered the responsibility of the classroom or reading teacher.</li> <li>• Until a language assessment has been completed, the evaluation team cannot make the most accurate determination of the student’s needs.</li> <li>• The SLP can conduct a language evaluation without providing intervention services for the student.</li> <li>• SLPs are one group of professionals designated in IDEA as being able to contribute to the diagnosis of specific learning disability (34 C.F.R. § 300.308 (b)).</li> </ul> <p>2. Twice a week, Joan, an SLP at an elementary school, goes into a kindergarten class to teach phonemic awareness. She has been doing this for the entire year.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching phonemic awareness is an essential component of the kindergarten teacher’s job.</li> <li>• An SLP could conduct a lesson or two to demonstrate a particular technique that the teacher can use to promote phonemic awareness, but the SLP’s role is not to assume</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The words the teacher assumes her students know will not be taught in the classroom. The SLP can provide valuable intervention by collaborating with the teacher and providing additional instruction on the vocabulary words needed for LI students to master the social studies and science content.</li> </ul>	<p>the role of the reading teacher.</p>
<p><b>Providing Culturally Competent Services—</b> There is an ever-increasing diversity in school populations. SLPs make important contributions to ensure that all students receive quality, culturally competent services. SLPs have the expertise to distinguish a language disorder from “something else.” That “something else” might reflect cultural and linguistic differences, socioeconomic factors, lack of adequate prior instruction, and/or the challenges of acquiring the dialect of English used in the schools. This expertise leads to more accurate and appropriate identification of student needs. SLPs can also address the impact of language differences and</p>	<p><b>1.</b> A teacher and an SLP confer about Edgar. The teacher indicates that Edgar does not respond to questions in class—even when the questions are very simple and the answers have been provided several times by the teacher. The teacher believes that Edgar has an auditory processing problem and, perhaps, a social/emotional problem. The teacher says that Edgar’s parents speak Spanish, but that he tested out of ESL services and uses English with his friends. The SLP obtains a language acquisition history for Edgar. In the process, she learns that Edgar comes from a culture where children are expected to be obedient and respectful of authority figures. The SLP requests that school-based professionals meet to consider how to work with the family and the student to ensure Edgar understands what is expected in class and feels comfortable speaking in class.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SLP is being sensitive to Edgar’s culture in considering how to best work with him and his family.</li> <li>If the approaches the professionals identify and employ do not produce the desired outcome of</li> </ul>	<p><b>1.</b> A teacher tells the SLP that Marques, an African American boy in her class, has a speech and language disability. He substitutes the (unvoiced “th” for the /f/) /f/ for the unvoiced /th or the /v/ for the voiced /th/ (and the /v/), and the student reverses sounds in words like the like the /sk/ in “ask”. She said that when reading out loud, Marques said, “The bruver aks him to take a baf” for “The brother asks him to take a bath.” The SLP listens to the boy reading and concludes that he cannot pronounce the words correctly. She agrees that this appears to be a typical articulation case and that a speech and language evaluation is warranted.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This does not appear to be a typical example of an articulation disorder.</li> <li>The SLP has not explored the student’s family background.</li> <li>Marques appears to be demonstrating phonological patterns that can be characteristic of African American speakers, which may constitute a dialectal difference and not a disorder.</li> </ul>

<p>second language acquisition on student learning and provide assistance to teachers in promoting educational growth.</p>	<p>greater participation in class, then further evaluation may be warranted.</p> <p>2. Quyen's teacher requests that he be evaluated because he appears detached from classroom discussions and never speaks or interacts with other students, even though he understands and speaks English and is succeeding in academics in school. The little interaction he does have is often inappropriate pragmatically. At recess, he wanders around without acknowledging the infrequent comments or questions posed by peers; it appears that he does not know how to initiate conversation or ask to join in a play activity. In addition, Quyen exhibits self-stimulation behaviors such as hand flapping. The team suggests deferring the evaluation, because Quyen's first language is Korean. The SLP recommends that she conduct an evaluation.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quyen is showing evidence of a possible autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and should be evaluated before any conclusion is drawn about the origin of his symptoms (e.g., that they stem from multicultural issues).</li> <li>• Although Korean children may be more reserved in their interactions than are children from American households, a number of Quyen's symptoms are idiosyncratic or deviate more significantly than what would be expected due to cultural influence.</li> </ul>	<p>2. Ashkir has been in the United States for 3 weeks. He grew up in a Somali refugee camp and has received no formal education. His fourth-grade teacher refers him to the SLP, because she believes he is having difficulty with comprehension and communication. The SLP agrees to assess Ashkir's receptive and expressive language.</p> <p><b>Why you don't want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashkir has not had time to learn the structure and expectations of school in the United States</li> <li>• Ashkir would benefit from peer models and buddies.</li> <li>• Ashkir should be referred to the ESL teacher.</li> <li>• Ashkir has not had time to learn about and adjust to his new culture.</li> <li>• The family should be involved in order for the SLP to determine whether the student has a disability in his native language or culture.</li> <li>• An accurate and appropriate identification of this student's needs should include consideration of cultural and linguistic differences and prior instructional experiences including in the student's second language.</li> </ul>
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<b>Range of Roles and Responsibilities</b> — <i>SLPs in schools are focused on helping students meet the performance standards of a particular school district and state.</i>		
<p><b>Prevention</b>—SLPs are integrally involved in the efforts of schools to prevent academic failure, no matter what form those initiatives take (e.g., <a href="#">Response to Intervention</a> or RTI).</p>	<p>The SLP is asked to serve on the RTI team at the school and also to be involved in helping teachers differentiate instruction in Tier 1.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SLP has valuable skills to offer to the team regarding language demands of the classroom and the language abilities of children and adolescents struggling in school.</li> <li>• The SLP’s analytic skills are frequently critical in analyzing the nature of difficulties in the classroom.</li> <li>• SLPs have a wealth of information to bring to the RTI table on the language basis of literacy and learning. They know that language provides the foundation for all curriculum learning, a fact that underscores the need for SLPs to step forward and assist with the RTI process.</li> <li>• SLPs have experience making instructional decisions based on student outcome data.</li> <li>• The SLPs are well-prepared to identify areas of weakness, break them down into applicable smaller components, and help design interventions to address those weaknesses.</li> </ul>	<p>The administrator asks the SLP to be the professional who administers literacy screening to all students in the primary grades. The SLP gladly accepts, because she wants to have a role in RTI.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing to screen all of the students would require a significant time commitment from the SLP and reduce time available to provide services that make use of the SLP’s unique expertise. In cases where the student’s language skills are of particular concern, the SLP may be involved in screenings.</li> <li>• Although SLPs can and should be integral members of RTI teams in schools, they should not conduct screenings on all students in a grade; more appropriate activities would be providing suggestions for screenings or designing trial interventions. Also, SLPs can help teachers analyze progress data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment</b>—SLPs conduct assessments in collaboration with others that help to identify students with</p>	<p>The SLP begins work in a new school and realizes that about 75% of the students on her caseload have major academic difficulties. She reviews their performance on state- and district-wide tests to identify specific performance factors and then</p>	<p>Jason’s behavior is socially appropriate, and he is able to converse effectively on a social level. However, he has little comprehension of academic language and expository text. Due to the time constraints of her schedule, the SLP has asked that</p>



<p>communication disorders as well as to inform instruction and intervention, consistent with EBP.</p>	<p>speaks with teachers about how the students perform in the classroom. Student learning targets are collaboratively established, in part, based on data that reflects language weaknesses impacting mastery of the students' curriculum.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By examining state assessments that are tied to the curriculum, the SLP has done a great job of identifying the language expectations of the curriculum. The SLP has created a link to the classroom instruction and teachers and demonstrated her ability to support them in enabling students to meet state standards.</li> <li>• SLPs are an integral part of the team and assist teachers to ensure the academic and/or educational success of students. IDEA states that a communication impairment must negatively impact on educational performance; therefore, it is essential that the SLP analyze the academic performance of students on the caseload to determine the appropriate way to address the adverse educational effect.</li> </ul>	<p>she not be required to observe Jason as part of his comprehensive assessment.</p> <p><b>Why you don't want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By not observing Jason during instruction, the SLP is missing an excellent opportunity to view his academic abilities through a language lens.</li> <li>• Observation by the SLP can show how language problems may be impacting the student's ability to comprehend academic language and expository text.</li> <li>• SLP may not be aware that students who converse adequately may have problems with more complex, academic language.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intervention</b>—SLPs provide intervention that is appropriate to the age and learning needs of individual students and is selected through an evidence-based decision-making process. Although service delivery models are typically more diverse in</p>	<p>At a recent IEP team meeting, Keisha's parents ask what the SLP is going to do to help their child with her language and fluency problems. The SLP describes to Keisha's parents and the rest of the team the approaches she is going to use and justifies her decisions using scientific evidence, including evidence about the effectiveness of treatment approaches in relation to the individual student's needs.</p>	<p>An SLP has typically worked with pre-K children with language disorders, but is now serving elementary students. She has lots of materials from her previous work and intends to use them with her new students.</p> <p><b>Why you don't want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While therapy techniques from her previous work may be appropriate, therapy materials must be age appropriate.</li> </ul>

<p>the school setting than in other settings, the therapy techniques used with students with disabilities are clinical in nature.</p>	<p><b><i>Why you do want to do this:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasingly, parents, administrators, other professionals, and advocates are asking SLPs to explain the rationale for decisions to select or reject certain treatment approaches.</li> <li>This SLP does not want to universally accept all “evidence.” Instead, she evaluates the quality of evidence pertinent to the case and engages in a decision-making process to select an intervention approach.</li> <li>She takes time to explain her decision-making process to the parents and team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A good place to start with elementary students is to identify the vocabulary and concepts taught within their general education classrooms.</li> <li>By creating materials related to the content of the student’s curriculum, the SLP can ensure therapy will have educational relevance and help children make progress in meeting applicable standards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Program Design</b>—It is essential that SLPs design school-wide speech-language services that employ a continuum of service delivery models in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities and that they integrate services to other students as appropriate.</p>	<p>For initial IEPs and when annual reviews are conducted, the SLP considers the least restrictive environment (LRE) and suggests that some therapy services be delivered in the classroom, when appropriate for the student.</p> <p><b><i>Why you do want to do this:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal law requires a full continuum of services in the LRE for all students, including those with speech and language impairment. For many students, services in the classroom constitute the LRE.</li> <li>By suggesting in-class services for some students, the SLP is beginning a gradual shift to a more diversified schedule reflecting a variety of service delivery models that more appropriately address individual needs.</li> <li>Providing services within the classroom may allow for more generalization and carryover of skills in a functional setting, as well as help the classroom teacher observe ways she can cue</li> </ul>	<p>The SLP’s schedule reflects that all therapy for all students—regardless of type or severity of the disorder—occurs twice a week following a pull-out model.</p> <p><b><i>Why you don’t want to do this:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The U.S. Department of Education has stated that placement decisions must be based on the individual needs of each child. By providing the same service to all students, this SLP has negated the “individualized” nature of the IEP. If all services are provided using only a pull-out model and all occur two times per week, it is unlikely that the needs of all students are being met in the LRE.</li> </ul>

	and support the student throughout the week.	
<p><b>Data Collection and Analysis</b>—SLPs, like all educators, are accountable for student performance outcomes. Therefore, the SLP’s essential responsibilities include supporting data-based decision making by gathering and interpreting data related to individual student performance as well as overall program success.</p>	<p>The principal of the school where John works as an SLP leaves him alone. However, John provides the principal with his weekly schedule as well as outcome data for his students.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important for administrators to have a good understanding of the SLP’s workload.</li> <li>• By providing this information along with outcome data, John will make it easier for the principal to appreciate the effects his services have on student achievement.</li> <li>• Sharing such information allows administrators to see not only the “caseload numbers,” but also the “weekly workload” attached to that caseload.</li> </ul>	<p>Betty is an SLP who does a lot of in-classroom therapy with her students. However, she maintains that classroom delivery does not permit her to take progress data.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betty is required to report the progress of her students. She cannot opt out.</li> <li>• Although she may not take data every time she is in the classroom, she must have some method to document her students’ progress.</li> <li>• SLPs can use various means to record progress toward reaching annual IEP goals, including work samples, periodic progress checks, teacher checklists and parent input.</li> <li>• Data she collects will confirm the importance of collaboration among teachers and SLPs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Compliance</b>—In performing their duties, SLPs are responsible for meeting federal and state mandates and adhering to local policies as well. Activities may include IEP development, Medicaid billing, report writing, and treatment plan/therapy log development.</p>	<p>Aruna, the SLP at both an elementary and middle school, has initiated a procedure to engage parents and teachers in meaningful dialogue about IEPs. She sends draft goals home to parents and distributes them to teachers as well. When she attends an IEP meeting, she brings a second draft of goals that incorporates relevant input.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal mandates clearly focus on involvement of parents and teachers in the IEP process.</li> <li>• By soliciting input from parents, as well as teachers, the SLP is allowing them to be active participants in decision-making processes.</li> <li>• Preparing the IEP is a collaborative process that</li> </ul>	<p>Joseph is a talented SLP who does great work with children and adolescents. However, he hates paperwork and does not complete the reports on his students in a timely manner.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal and state mandates stipulate that progress on IEP goals be reported as often as progress is reported for all general education students in the district.</li> <li>• By not reporting as required, Joseph is out of compliance. This situation can have serious repercussions when revealed during due process hearings or site reviews conducted by the state.</li> </ul>

	integrates information from a variety of sources, resulting in a more complete/accurate view of the student.	
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<b>Collaboration—SLPs work in partnership with others to meet students’ needs.</b>		
<p><b>With Other School Professionals</b>—SLPs provide services to support the instructional program at a school. SLPs’ unique contributions complement and augment those made by other professionals who also have unique perspectives and skills. It is essential for SLPs to work collegially with general education teachers who have the primary responsibility for curriculum and instruction. 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</p>	<p>Scott’s parents question his IEP, which reflects indirect services provided to him. They explain that the SLP who previously worked with Scott said that only direct services were important. Julia, his current SLP, explains the importance of collaboration with teachers as a linchpin in Scott’s intervention plan and discusses indirect services in that light.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is common for parents to question any services other than direct services, because they assume other services are not valuable. They do not always understand the importance of maintaining therapeutic targets over time and across settings unless those realities are explained to them.</li> <li>• The SLP discussed the reasons why indirect services are appropriate for Scott and how they relate to the need for collaboration.</li> <li>• The SLP explained how indirect services are appropriate at this time to implement Scott’s IEP goals.</li> </ul>	<p>At the annual review, the SLP recommends continuation of in-class collaborative services. However, the student’s teacher says that she will not collaborate but that the SLP is welcome to observe. The SLP agrees.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEP goals cannot be implemented through observation alone. Close collaboration with teachers is needed.</li> <li>• The SLP cannot give up so easily on collaboration. This SLP made no attempt to convince the teacher that working together was beneficial and, in fact, necessary.</li> <li>• The SLP could provide examples of how they could work together to help the student.</li> <li>• Teachers are not always aware of the seriousness of complying with federal and state mandates and the need to satisfy requirements for an IEP.</li> </ul>

<p>and implementing programs is also crucial.</p>		
<p><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.</p>	<p>A local university is establishing an advisory committee for their master’s degree program in speech-language pathology and invites school-based SLP leaders to serve.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The university recognizes that most SLPs who graduate from their program will work in schools.</li> <li>• It is essential that the program prepare them well for the work they will do.</li> <li>• Asking for consumer input sends a positive message about the desire for collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p>At a district SLP meeting, a university researcher requests assistance with her study. One attendee replies, “Conducting research is not our job.”</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This response represents a narrow view that will not enhance the practice of speech-language pathology in schools. Expanding the empirical base of the profession is a collaborative enterprise.</li> <li>• Use of evidence-based practice is not just good practice; it’s a federal mandate.</li> <li>• Many areas in which SLPs have practice questions need further study. If university researchers conduct research in the schools, the results can inform practice of school-based SLPs.</li> <li>• The SLPs who assist the university researcher will benefit from the partnership.</li> </ul>
<p><b>With the Community</b>—SLPs work with various individuals and agencies involved in teaching or providing services to children and youth, including, for example, physicians, private therapy practitioners, social service agencies, private schools, and vocational</p>	<p>Lydia, a school-based SLP, receives a report from a private SLP who recommends two individual therapy sessions of 45 minutes each for a student attending Lydia’s school. The report includes no classroom observation; it is based on information from standardized testing and informal testing. It is professionally written, and the diagnosis appears accurate. After she obtains permission to evaluate, Lydia she plans to observe the student in the classroom. Then, she intends to call the private SLP to discuss overall concerns, the educational</p>	<p>Maya, the SLP at Wonderful Elementary School, sees a child with a consistently hoarse voice who is constantly clearing his throat and whose voice cracks periodically. Maya seeks an evaluation by an otolaryngologist. She receives a letter from a physician stating his belief that referral for a specialized examination is unwarranted. The SLP is intimidated and decides not to pursue the issue.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the obligation of the SLP to appropriately</li> </ul>

<p>rehabilitation staff.</p>	<p>relevance of the disorder, frequency and duration of services, and service delivery models that will best meet the needs of the student.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important for SLPs in various settings to discuss findings on mutual clients and to discuss differences in recommendations across settings.</li> <li>• Private practitioners often have a different perspective on amount and duration of service; sometimes they are not aware of the criteria to provide services and the unique opportunities available in schools for service delivery.</li> <li>• Only through communication among professionals will differences become better understood, so that recommendations better reflect the best interest of child or adolescent.</li> </ul>	<p>evaluate any child with a disability that has the potential to affect educational performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because voice treatment cannot be completed without medical clearance, it is the obligation of the SLP to learn the district’s policy in this regard.</li> <li>• Policies regarding payment for medical evaluations may differ in states and school districts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>With Families</b>—For students of all ages, it is essential that SLPs engage families in planning, decision making, and program implementation.</p>	<p>A parent questions the relevance of speech-language services to the acquisition of required Common Core State Standards in high school. She worries that therapy will take too much time away from class work. The SLP carefully explains the relevance of the student learning targets and therapy to curriculum learning, making the point that working on the language underpinnings of curriculum will enhance the student’s performance in courses and on the state assessment.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with language disabilities have difficulty accessing and using the academic</li> </ul>	<p>Parents or other team members request a specific treatment approach that is not evidence-based. The SLP at Most Middle School is not comfortable using this treatment approach but acquiesces to please the parents.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents may hear about treatments touted as providing overnight results or “cures.” The SLP can present information showing that techniques are or are not research-based.</li> <li>• The SLP can also suggest an approach used in the past that has proven successful. If necessary to convince a parent, the SLP can share the details of monitoring that documents student progress</li> </ul>

	<p>language of curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By providing examples of how student learning targets are aligned with required Common Core State Standards, the SLP helps parents to appreciate the connection between therapy and curriculum.</li> <li>• The SLP provides the rationale for speech-language services that would make sense to the parent of a high school student by explaining that her role is to provide the speech-language support needed to help students achieve curricular goals.</li> <li>• The SLP takes time to acknowledge the parent's concern and does not dismiss such concern as trivial.</li> </ul>	<p>achieved through the SLP's use of the technique.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working collaboratively with families does not mean doing whatever the families want. IDEA mandates that families' requests must be considered, however, action must be supported by evidence-based decision making.</li> <li>• This SLP should have tactfully and respectfully held his ground.</li> </ul>
<p><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.</p>	<p>A high school student resists participation in "speech therapy," saying that he does not find it relevant to his classwork and his problems with organization. The SLP discusses the student's academic problems and matches IEP goals to specific outcomes in the student's courses, as well as state curriculum standards. She also explains the language aspect of speech-language therapy.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students often think of the SLP's services as being related only to speech; they do not recognize the effects of services on language.</li> <li>• Students also may not understand the language basis of their learning problems.</li> <li>• The SLP can ask the student to bring in one class period's work in a subject the student finds challenging. Using the work, the SLP and</li> </ul>	<p>High school students do not show up for scheduled sessions. The SLP neither pursues the students nor asks for assistance from the guidance counselor or other team members.</p> <p><b>Why you don't want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ultimately, the SLP is not providing FAPE to students with IEPs.</li> <li>• Often, adolescents don't attend therapy sessions due to problems created by an inappropriate service delivery model. They do not like the attention drawn to them when they leave class, and, they typically cannot academically afford to miss class.</li> <li>• The SLP has not been proactive in analyzing the problem and identifying solutions, such as determining whether the student can earn credit for attending therapy or identifying the student's</li> </ul>

	student set goals for the semester and agree to collaborate in pursuit of these goals.	interests and motivation.
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<b>Leadership</b> — <i>SLPs provide direction in defining their roles and responsibilities and in ensuring appropriate services to students.</i>		
<p><b>Advocacy</b>—To be productive and effective, SLPs must advocate for not only appropriate programs and services for children and adolescents, but also desirable working conditions, such as 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</p>	<p>Two SLPs in the district are on maternity leave. The special education administrator tells the remaining SLPs that she was unable to find substitutes; therefore, each SLP would have to add a proportionate number of students to his or her caseload. These SLPs already have full caseloads. Adding new students may jeopardize the right to FAPE of students they serve. The SLPs meet with administrators to brainstorm solutions, such as expanding recruitment efforts.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a very common situation in which SLP advocacy is essential. The worst course of action would be to do nothing and simply add more students to the caseload. It would also be problematic for an SLP to refuse to see any of these children, because the district then would be at risk for noncompliance. Service to all students would suffer.</li> <li>• Being proactive and meeting with the district administrator to brainstorm possible ways to find SLPs to take over for those on maternity leave is an excellent leadership move.</li> <li>• The district SLPs realize that many school administrators don't know how to locate SLPs to serve in schools and would welcome the advocacy and input.</li> </ul>	<p>SLPs in a local school district have to complete excessive paperwork related to reporting services eligible for funding under Medicaid. They do not want to be part of this time-consuming effort. Rather than advocating for assistance, the SLPs refuse to complete the paperwork.</p> <p><b>Why you don't want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School districts bill for Medicaid funds to earn more money for their programs. The paperwork chore is a nonnegotiable aspect of this situation.</li> <li>• SLPs can advocate for an arrangement where individuals are paid either to help complete the paperwork or to perform some other administrative task, thereby giving SLPs more time to do the paperwork themselves.</li> <li>• SLPs can also advocate for allocating some of the Medicaid funds to the speech-language program.</li> </ul>



<p>promote best practice.</p> <p><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.</p>	<p>The coordinator of student teaching from the local university contacted the district’s speech and language coordinator to ask if any SLPs would accept a student teacher or graduate student extern for the following quarter/semester. Debbie, a veteran SLP, enthusiastically volunteers.</p> <p><i>Why you do want to do this:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is definitely an opportunity for Debbie to give back to her profession and to those who follow.</li> <li>• She is a competent, confident professional, who is well-integrated into her school and can not only provide excellent supervision, but also serve as an excellent model for the aspiring professional.</li> <li>• When making this decision, she kept in mind that someone had to mentor her, in order for her to meet her professional requirements.</li> <li>• This activity may help the SLP identify a potential future employee.</li> </ul>	<p>The district SLP coordinator has assigned a graduate student extern to Lola, who is responsible for mentoring and supervision. Instead of recognizing the arrangement as a learning experience for the student, Lola decides this is a great way to take a break from her busy schedule. She spends a considerable amount of time in the teacher’s lounge “collaborating” with other teachers rather than supervising the extern.</p> <p><i>Why you don’t want to do this:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lola put the student’s practicum at risk by failing to provide the required amount of supervision. This failure could be viewed as unethical professional behavior that is in violation of <a href="#">ASHA’s Code of Ethics</a>.</li> <li>• Lola may be putting her Certificate of Clinical Competence at risk, because ASHA specifies time requirements for observation. To relegate caseload oversight and intervention activities to an extern poses ethical and practice problems. The SLP accepted the responsibility to supervise and mentor a new professional who is interested in working in a school setting. Personnel shortages are a persistent problem. Programs that model successful and appropriate service delivery should be promoted and shared with other SLPs.</li> <li>• By not fulfilling her supervision/mentoring responsibilities, she modeled unethical behavior and wasted the opportunity to mold a young professional.</li> </ul>
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<p><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.</p>	<p>The principal is putting together next year’s calendar of faculty meetings and in-service activities. She asks the faculty for ideas for topics. The SLP knows that his colleagues and administrators do not have a clear understanding of the role of SLPs in supporting language and literacy. He views these events as great opportunities for him to spend time with his colleagues and explain how the SLP can help them support the performance of students school-wide. He presents a plan to the principal for using faculty-meeting or in-service activity venues to conduct professional development.</p> <p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time is a precious commodity for staff during any school year. It is necessary to prioritize and make time for certain important topics. The SLP has critical information about language, literacy, and communication. An appropriate venue to share that information would be regularly scheduled meetings when colleagues have time to learn about designated topics.</li> <li>• This SLP is being proactive in getting language and literacy topics onto the calendar.</li> </ul>	<p>Joyce is the SLP at two schools and could provide professional development to the teachers at her schools. However, she is afraid that if teachers learn more about her roles and responsibilities as a school-based SLP, her referrals will increase. She feels that she cannot handle a larger caseload, so she does not offer to conduct professional development.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By educating teachers, Joyce could develop a collaborative working relationship that enables teachers to more effectively address students’ language needs.</li> <li>• Teachers who are better informed about communication and its disorders typically make more appropriate referrals; Joyce’s referrals may actually decrease as a result of professional development that she might offer.</li> </ul>
<p><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. Training may be especially helpful to families in</p>	<p>An SLP who provides services in a pre-K program conducts classes for parents on the connection between communication and literacy development. Content covers activities to help their children develop communication skills and learn vocabulary, including what parents can do while reading to their children.</p>	<p>At a school faculty meeting, the pre-K teacher suggests that she and the SLP conduct training for parents to promote kindergarten success. However, the principal believes the SLP has no expertise to contribute. The SLP backs off the project.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SLP needs to assert the validity of her role in</li> </ul>

<p>creating a language and literacy-rich environment.</p>	<p><b>Why you do want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SLP can play a critical role in assisting parents to facilitate emergent literacy.</li> <li>• The SLP can assist parents in targeting age appropriate communication skills with their children to promote academic success.</li> </ul>	<p>this area and educate others in this regard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SLP has expertise in targeting vocabulary development, phonological and phonemic awareness, and oral communication skills, among other areas.</li> <li>• Collaborating with the pre-K teacher to assist parents in preparing their children for school is one way to demonstrate the SLP’s connection to literacy and language development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Research</b>—Federal law requires the use of scientifically-based practices in the schools. It is important for SLPs to participate in research to support evidence-based assessment and intervention practices.</p>	<p>An administrator requests to see research on a technique currently being used by the SLP during therapy sessions. There is very little empirical data on the technique. The SLP summarizes the research for the administrator and also provides data she has collected on the effectiveness of the technique as used with her clients/students.</p> <p><b>Why you want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal laws require the use of approaches that have a scientific research base.</li> <li>• It behooves the SLP to know the evidence for a technique she is using.</li> <li>• In the event that the research on a particular technique is scant, the SLP should be familiar with related research and record and keep her own data on the use of the technique.</li> </ul>	<p>Bruce attends a convention at which vendors promote the materials they are selling as “research-based.” Bruce concludes that anything at the convention with this label is a good buy for use in speech-language therapy.</p> <p><b>Why you don’t want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People use the term <i>research-based</i> to mean a number of things. It could mean that the developers are familiar with the research in an area and developed their materials/technique/approach based on principles contained in the literature or that they conducted randomized control trials on their materials/technique/approach.</li> <li>• Bruce needs to be a more analytical consumer and ask the question, “What do you mean when you use the term <i>research-based</i>?”</li> </ul>
	<p>The SLP becomes aware that a new teacher evaluation system is being developed in her state. The evaluation will rate the SLP in areas that do not reflect her roles and responsibilities. The SLP gathers information about other evaluation systems that are being used, and joins forces with</p>	

	<p>SLPs in the state to advocate being on the committee that is developing the new system.</p> <p><b>Why you want to do this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an opportunity for SLPs to have an evaluation that will educate administrators about the scope of the SLP's job.</li> <li>• Personnel shortages are a persistent problem in some areas and an inappropriate evaluation system can be a deterrent for recruiting and retaining SLPs in schools.</li> <li>• An appropriate evaluation tool allows for continuous improvement by focusing on ways that SLPs can participate in relevant professional development that will help SLPs grow and learn.</li> </ul>	
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## Resources

- [ASHA School Setting](#)
- [Caseload/Workload](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Common Core State Standards](#)
- [Ethics and School Practice](#)
- [Evidence-Based Practice](#)
- [IDEA Action Center](#)
- [Literacy Gateway](#)
- [Response to Intervention \(RTI\)](#)
- [Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools](#)
- [Scope of Practice](#)
- [Working With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Schools](#)