

# Assistants Resource Sheet

Challenge	Response	Resources
<p><b>Have you or a colleague recently been assigned a speech-language pathology assistant (SLPA) and you aren't sure how to best utilize them or supervise them in your setting?</b></p>	<p>Support personnel in speech-language pathology—known as <i>speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs)</i>—perform tasks as prescribed, directed, and supervised by ASHA-certified and/or -licensed speech-language pathologists (SLPs). Support personnel can be used to increase the availability, frequency, and efficiency of services.</p> <p>Some tasks, procedures, or activities used to treat individuals with communication and related disorders can be performed successfully by individuals other than SLPs if the persons conducting the activity are properly trained and supervised by ASHA-certified and/or -licensed SLPs. The decision to shift responsibility for implementation of the more repetitive, mechanical, or routine clinical activities to SLPAs should be made only by qualified professionals and only when the quality of care and level of professionalism will not be compromised. The utilization of evidence as well as ethical and professional judgment should be at the heart of the selection, management, training, supervision, and use of support personnel.</p> <p>Read the <a href="#">Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice</a> to find specific information regarding the responsibilities of SLPAs that are both within and outside their scope of practice or to simply get a general overview of SLPAs.</p>	<p>American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2013). <i>Speech-language pathology assistant scope of practice</i> [Scope of Practice]. Available from <a href="http://www.asha.org/policy">www.asha.org/policy</a>.</p>

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<p><b>Have you ever wanted an assistant who could also be an ally and a fellow advocate?</b></p>	<p>Many ASHA members find that when they are given the opportunity to work with an SLPA, they often wonder how they were able to function as efficiently without them. Quite often, successful SLP–SLPA teams may form very collaborative and rewarding professional relationships and may serve as advocates and allies for each other. The following articles show how some of these more collaborative relationships benefit the SLP, the SLPA, the work setting, and, most of all, the clients and patients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A successful working relationship between an SLP and an SLPA, according to one productive team, requires three vital components: (a) communication, (b) organization, and (c) collaboration. Read more about how SLP Becki Grier and SLPA Norma Sanchez have forged an effective partnership in providing services to the 230 students (Grade 7 through 12, up to age 22) at Hope High School in Buena Park, California (<a href="#">Polovoy, 2011</a>).</li> <li>• The student body of Pinehurst Elementary in Salisbury, Maryland, could present a potential challenge for any team of educators. The school has a student body of 475, including students in general education and self-contained special education classrooms. SLP Amy Bradford has a caseload of 50 students in the self-contained classrooms, many with severe communication deficits who need intense intervention. Although Bradford is experienced, she is grateful to have help from SLPA Alexis Tabor (<a href="#">Rowden-Racette, 2011</a>).</li> <li>• In this <i>ASHA Leader</i> Blog post, find out how SLP Katie Millican utilizes an experienced SLPA in her school system to ease her caseload and to help her provide even better care than she did before (<a href="#">Millican, 2015</a>).</li> </ul>	<p>Millican, A. K. (2015, March 24). An SLPA eases a school SLP’s load. <i>The ASHA Leader Blog</i>.</p> <p>Polovoy, C. (2011). <a href="#">California SLP-SLPA team forge successful partnership</a>. <i>The ASHA Leader</i>, 16(8). Online only. doi:10.1044/leader.SOA2.16082011.np</p> <p>Rowden-Racette, K. (2011). <a href="#">Dynamic duo forges smooth relationship</a>. <i>The ASHA Leader</i>, 16(8). Online only. doi:10.1044/leader.SOA1.16082011.np</p>

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<p><b>Have you ever felt overwhelmed with the amount of work you have and wished for someone to assist you by taking over some of the more routine aspects of your job?</b></p>	<p>SLPAs can be used to “increase the availability, frequency, and efficiency of services” if “the decision to shift responsibility for implementation of the more repetitive, mechanical, or routine clinical activities to SLPAs . . . [is] made only by qualified professionals and only when the quality of care and level of professionalism will not be compromised” (Ostergren &amp; Aguilar,</p> <p>For more information, see the presentation, <i>Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs): Current Trends</i> (<a href="#">Ostergren &amp; Aguilar, 2014</a>), which was part of the 2014 ASHA Convention handouts.</p>	<p>Ostergren, J. A., &amp; Aguilar, S. (2014, November). <i>Speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs): Current trends</i>. Session presented at the ASHA Convention, Orlando, Florida. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.asha.org/Events/convention/handouts/2014/1600-Aguilar/">www.asha.org/Events/convention/handouts/2014/1600-Aguilar/</a></p>