

How Do I Become A Speech-Language Pathologist?

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What Does a Speech-Language Pathologist Do?

A speech-language pathologist (SLP) is a highly-trained specialist in the field of communication sciences and disorders. An SLP evaluates and treats speech, language, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in children and adults. An SLP may also teach at a college or university, manage a clinic or practice, research topics in the field, supervise, develop new methods and products, or work with corporate employees to improve communication with their customers. An SLP often collaborates with parents and other professionals such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, nurses, physicians, social workers, audiologists, psychologists, and teachers (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d., ¶ 2).



What Are the Steps to Become a Speech-Language Pathologist?

Undergraduate degree . Complete a program of study in communication sciences and disorders or related field. Take liberal arts coursework including linguistics, psychology, mathematics, anatomy, education, and phonetics. During undergraduate study in communication sciences and disorders, you will acquire observation hours by watching SLPs and/or graduate clinicians performing a variety of diagnostic and therapy sessions.

Master's or Doctoral degree . Complete a program of study mandated by the Council For Clinical Certification (CFCC) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) in order to obtain a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) in Speech-Language Pathology. Find accredited programs using this link: <http://www.asha.org/students/academic/EdFind/>. During your higher-education program, you will perform clinical therapy sessions under the supervision of faculty professors and clinical supervisors. You will also gain supervised experience by conducting diagnostic evaluations and performing therapy in educational and medical settings outside of the university.

Praxis National Examination . Achieve a passing score on the speech-language pathology national examination. This examination assesses knowledge and competency in the field of speech-language pathology across all areas of study including articulation, language, oral-motor musculature, fluency, and voice.

Clinical Fellowship Year (CFY) . Complete a nine-month work experience under the supervision of a qualified and CCC-certified SLP in an educational or medical setting.

Maintenance of Continuing Education (CE) . All speech-language pathologists must continue to develop professionally by earning 30 contact hours of continuing education every three years to maintain the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) with ASHA. *State licensure and teaching certificate continuing education hours may vary.*

In some career domains, such as college professorship, research, and private practice, a Ph.D. degree is desirable. In most states, SLPs and audiologists also must comply with state regulatory (licensure) standards to practice and/or have a state education certification.

Where Do SLPs Work?

SLPs work in many settings including schools, private practices, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, government agencies, research laboratories, and home-health (ASHA, n.d., ¶ 4).



Will I Find a Job?

The future job market for speech-language pathology is expected to grow faster than average through 2014 (ASHA, n.d., ¶ 11). Members of the baby-boom generation are now entering the age of retirement when the possibility of neurological disorders and associated speech, language, swallowing, and hearing impairments increases. Employment in educational settings is also expected to increase along with growth in elementary and secondary school enrollments, including enrollment of special education students. Federal law ensures special education and related services to all eligible children with disabilities. The number of speech-language pathologists in private practice will rise due to the increasing use of contract services by hospitals, schools, and nursing facilities (ASHA, n.d., ¶ 13).

Resource

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (n.d.). *Fact sheet – Speech-language pathology*. Retrieved October 26, 2009, from www.asha.org/careers/professions/slp.htm

Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit www.superduperinc.com and type in the item name or number in our search engine. Click the links below to see the product description.

SLP Starter Kit
[Item #KIT-58](#)

Contextualized Language Intervention
[Item #TPX-29801](#)

Normal Development Software and Text
[Item #TP-7802](#)

Making a Difference for America's Children
(Second Edition)
[Item #TP-29703](#)

Year 'Round Lifesavers & Timesavers CD-ROM
[Item #BKCD-1986](#)

Webber® Awards & Certificates for
Speech-Language Pathologists
[Item #BKCD-406](#)

Webber's® Logbook for
Speech-Language Pathologists
[Item #BK-201](#)