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Which Speech Therapy Setting is Best for Your Child?

by Lindsey Wegner M.S., CCC-SLP

As a parent, you may have determined that your child requires speech and language services but may not be aware of the different settings in which a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) can see your child. There are several different options when it comes to seeking services for your child and it's important to know the pros and cons for each.

Private Practice (in office)

PROS:

- **Specialized Treatment.** SLPs have more ability to pick and choose their cases based on what they specialize in within the field.
- **In-depth Assessment and Report.** SLPs often have more time and resources to provide extreme detail in their testing and report writing capabilities.
- **Individual care.** Within this type of setting, an SLP is more likely to see your child one-on-one and be able to provide more personalized treatment. They will also be able to accommodate your needs and wants for your child through communicating with you either before, during, or after every session.
- **Not During School Hours.** When attending a private practice you may be able to see your SLP after school hours. Many parents find this appealing, allowing their children to stay in the general education setting during the school day.



CONS:

- **Cost.** Private therapy can be expensive if your insurance does not cover it.
- **Lack of Communication with School.** An SLP in a private practice does not have the same access to teachers as a school based SLP tends to have.



Private Practice (at home)

PROS:

- **Open Schedule.** SLPs may be more likely to adjust seeing your child on your time schedule and when you will be home.
- **Convenience.** You do not have to travel. Also, this might be more beneficial for children who have difficulty with changing settings or entering new places.
- **Specific Attention and Time.** SLPs will see your child individually in your home setting and be more accessible for questions and carryover.



CONS:

- **Distractions.** In the home environment, there can be many distractions due to easy access to a child's own toys, books, other siblings, etc.
- **Lack of Materials.** An SLP can only bring so many materials to your home and may not be able to access different materials through traveling.



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Public Schools

PROS:

- **Free.** Public school therapy services are free of cost.
- **Easy Access to Others and Child.** A school-based SLP is naturally in the setting where your child is most of their day. They can access your child and your child's teachers easily to address their needs and wants.
- **Comfort and Experience.** A school-based SLP likely sees many children a day and is exposed to many situations with children. They are very comfortable with and timely in diagnosing a child's disorders.



CONS:

- **Lack of time.** Many school-based SLPs are very pushed for time when they are dealing with large caseloads. This makes it difficult for them to have time to communicate with parents and plan ideal lessons for each student.
- **Group Therapy.** Many therapy sessions within the school setting are group therapy based due to time restrictions and caseload sizes.
- **Interruptions.** Days off and breaks can lead to large gaps between therapy sessions.

Hospitals

PROS:

- **Availability to Medical Equipment and Personnel.** Having your child seen in a medical setting could be beneficial for medically fragile children due to easy access to equipment and medical supplies.
- **Expertise.** Medical facilities can cater to certain needs of children helping to increase therapy services.



CONS:

- **Cost.** Only certain insurances will cover the cost depending on the need of service.
- **School Hours.** You may need to pull your child out during school hours to be seen by an SLP.
- **Decreased Experience with Children.** In general hospitals, many SLPs may see both children and adults, limiting their specialty of certain disorders with children.

Whatever setting you choose, remember your child should be seen as early as possible for increased success. SLPs are masters at multitasking and helping your child to the best of their abilities in any setting depending on your child's needs. Speak with your child's SLP to determine what setting would be most beneficial for him/her.

Resources:

Hamaguchi, Patricia M. Childhood Speech, Language & Listening Problems. Hoboken; John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995.

Drennen, Pam. Pros and Cons of Speech Therapy Settings. Retrieved from <https://kidmunicate.com/pros-and-cons-of-speech-therapysessions/> on April 4, 2018

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