

## Who are Speech-Language Pathologists?

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) are professionals whose practice is controlled in Ontario by the Regulated Health Professionals Act and the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act. SLPs have specialized knowledge and skills in speech, language, and communication development and disorders, and are key members of interdisciplinary educational teams.

## Why are Speech-Language Pathologists necessary within an educational setting?

Language is the medium through which teachers instruct and students learn. Effective communication skills support students in accessing the curriculum, getting along socially with others, and participating in school. The ability of students to understand and use oral and written language to communicate will affect their academic, social, and vocational success.

Approximately 10% of school-age children have speech and language delays or disorders which vary in nature and severity. Speech-Language Disorders often co-exist with a number of other disabilities such as autism, learning disabilities, developmental handicaps, behavior difficulties, physical handicaps, and hearing impairment.

SLPs assist teachers in understanding the oral language needs of students and the interrelationships between listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Together with teachers, SLPs develop curriculum-based strategies to address the language learning needs of students in the classroom.

# SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS' ROLES & SERVICES

## SCHOOL BOARDS

*For additional information about speech-language pathology or audiology, contact our professional association at 416-920-3676 or visit [www.osla.on.ca](http://www.osla.on.ca).*



## When should a student be discussed with the Speech-Language Pathologist?

In many district school boards a referral to the SLP is discussed at a school support team meeting so that a student's speech and language needs may be considered within the broader contact of the student's educational needs. Teachers and/or parents should discuss a student with the SLP if they have questions concerning a student's ability to:

- Follow directions
- Understand classroom conversations
- Understand and retell stories
- Socialize with peers
- Organize ideas sequentially
- Use appropriate vocabulary, word order, and grammar
- Speak on a topic
- Speak clearly
- Speak fluently
- Learn sounds skills necessary to read and write

## What services do Speech-Language Pathologists provide?

The school-based SLP provides a range of services to support students with speech, language, and communication needs within the educational setting. Services may include:

### Consultation

- Participating on school support teams to provide early intervention and programming support and to facilitate appropriate referrals to the school SLP
- Consulting with regular and special education teachers to enhance and adapt academic programs to meet the needs of students with a range of oral language and communication needs.
- In forming and assisting parents to support the development of the student's communication skills at home and in the community.

### Assessment

- Providing assessments based on classroom observation, review of the Ontario Student Record, interviews with teachers, parents, other professionals involved, informal tasks, and formal testing according to the student's needs
- Providing teachers, parents and other participating professionals with an understanding of the student's oral language and social communication needs as related to language learning, literacy development, behavior and general ability to participate in the classroom program.
- Developing recommendations and programming suggestions resulting from observation and assessment in collaboration with teachers, other professionals involved, parents, and in some cases, the capable student

## Programming

- Working collaboratively with teachers to highlight and modify the language components of the classroom program based on the understanding of the interrelationships among oral language, literacy, behavior, and social adaptive skills.
- Supporting teachers in developing language and social communication strategies for Individual Education Plans for students with severe communication needs
- Selecting, demonstrating, and determining the effectiveness of special technology as an aid to communication in the classroom; this may be facilitated at the school board level or in consultation with outside agencies.

## Direct Programming

- Working with teachers in the classroom to demonstrate specific oral language and communication facilitation strategies.
- Partnering with teachers in delivering kindergarten language intervention or special education programs.
- Providing short-term intervention, either directly or through a mediator, for individuals or groups of students.

## Community Liaison

- Liaising with community-based service providers.
- Referring to and liaising with Community Care Access Centres and School Health Support Services for those students who would benefit from direct speech therapy.