



# Speech Services: Prevention and Scaffolding

Office of Special Education

## Overview

Roles and responsibilities of Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) include prevention, assessment, diagnosis and treatment, among others. Less often in schools and more often in medical settings, SLPs help individuals that have feeding and swallowing difficulties and disorders. Within school settings, more often the primary focus for SLPs is communication. Communication refers to the receptive (input) and expressive (output) components that help us interact within our environments, ourselves, and among one another. When breakdowns occur, SLPs can facilitate growth within these areas.



[Speech and Language Website \(NJOSE\)](#)



[School-Based Service Delivery in Speech-Language Pathology](#) (including cultural considerations)

## Data and Statistics

on the impacts of the Pandemic on Speech.



61%

of respondents for an [American Institutes for Research \(AIR\) survey](#) said it was "more difficult" or "substantially more difficult" to deliver speech therapy supports during the pandemic.



96%

of schools said they were either "very concerned" or "quite concerned" in student's communication and language development. In this same study, completed by the [Education Endowment Foundation \(2021\)](#), speech was identified as the greatest area of concern, above personal, social and emotional development (91%) and literacy (89%) skills.

"Literacy development is also heavily reliant on the development of strong speech, language and communication abilities. The impacts of the pandemic identified a reduction of exposure to new vocabulary which is a primary predictor of student entry level performance and future academic outcomes."

## Promising Practices

1

### Scaffolding Toward Improved Outcomes

Secondary to living through a pandemic, certain populations have become more susceptible to communication disorders, for example, children learning language/ in critical years of development, and individuals with hearing loss. Identifying individual areas of need helps us to identify the instructional strategies needed to help scaffold students' knowledge. This includes directly teaching students skills regarding social-emotional competence and self-regulation, which positively benefits students' cognitive, academic, communicative and behavioral capabilities.

2

### Increasing Opportunities for Communication Post-Pandemic (Resource: Refreshing Social Skills)

Opportunities for incidental learning in naturalistic environments were decreased, impacting students' processing from implicit to explicit memory. Naturalistic environments in schools may include before/after school programs, socialization in the cafeteria, communication through physical education team building activities or during peer/ group work time in classrooms. Additional opportunities for language and socialization within naturalistic environments creates an avenue for practitioners to observe functional language and provide individualized feedback. This supports students' abilities to become effective communicators and lay the foundation for later developing literacy skills.

3

### Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists With Respect to Reading and Writing in Children and Adolescents (ASHA)

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) play a critical and direct role in the development of literacy for children and adolescents with communication disorders, including those with severe or multiple disabilities. SLPs also make a contribution to the literacy efforts of a school district or community on behalf of other children and adolescents. These roles are implemented in collaboration with others who have expertise in the development of written language and vary with settings and experience of those involved.

## Resources



[Office of Special Education \(NJDOE\): Assistive Technology](#)



[CDC's Developmental Milestones](#)



[Resources for Parents and Families](#)



[Social Communication Disorder \(ASHA Practice Portal\)](#)