Support Personnel: Training, Trends and Regulation
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“Stories are how we understand one another, how we preserve the past, and how we make meaning from the chaos of our lives…”

Anthony Marra
A Constellation of Vital Phenomena
Overview

- Definition of SLPAs and Support Personnel
- ASHA's History with Support Personnel
- Speech-Language Pathology Professional Summit
- ASHA Scope of Practice and Education and Supervision of SLPAs
- ASHA Practice Portal and Use of Support Personnel
- Reimbursement
- State Laws and Regulations
- ASHA Affiliates Program
- ASHA Web Resources

Definitions of SLPA Support Personnel

- ASHA defines speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs) as individuals who, following academic coursework, clinical practicum, and credentialing can perform tasks prescribed, directed, and supervised by ASHA-certified SLPs.
- Definitions of SLPAs and other support personnel vary in states

![Diagram showing timeline and milestones related to ASHA's commitment to support personnel.]

ASHA created the Committee on Support Personnel

1967

1969

1970

1979

1981

1990-91

1992/94/95

ASHA developed guidelines for the use of support personnel

The IC approved the Guidelines for the Communicative Role

The Ethical Practice Board issues an Ethics statement on support personnel

ASHA policy documents on support personnel created including the technical report positions statement and guidelines

The 1967 committee surmounted and the Task force on Support Personnel was created
Six recommendations were approved by attendees and sent to ASHA’s BOD for consideration:

- ASHA should develop a shared lexicon
- ASHA should develop and publish a framework that articulates the range of acceptable practice across the different service provider levels
- ASHA should consider developing a comprehensive assessment consistent with its commitment to inclusion—A national examination represents one such option

2011 SLP Summit Recommendations

- ASHA should develop model state regulatory language for the regulation of SLPAs
- ASHA should develop principles and protocols of effective supervision for both supervisors and those who require and benefit from supervision
- ASHA should form a task force, in cooperation with the Council of Academic Programs, to study the continuum of academic preparation and determine how the continuum can best support SLPA and SLP preparation

Summit Recommendations
Speech–Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice

Qualifications and responsibilities for SLPAs
Tasks that are the exclusive responsibilities of the SLP
Guidance on ethical considerations
Guidance on supervisory responsibilities of the supervising SLP
Definitions

Qualifications of an SLPA
The academic course of study must include or be equivalent to
- an associate's degree in a SLPA program or
- a bachelor's degree in a speech–language pathology or communication disorders program and
- successful completion of a minimum of one hundred (100) hours of supervised field work experience or its clinical experience equivalent and
- demonstration of competency in the skills required of an SLPA.
Limitations on SLPA Scope

The SLPA should NOT engage in the following:

- represent himself or herself as an SLP;
- perform standardized or nonstandardized diagnostic tests, formal or informal evaluations, or swallowing screenings/checklists;
- perform procedures that require a high level of clinical acumen and technical skill (e.g., vocal tract prosthesis shaping or fitting, vocal tract imaging and oral pharyngeal swallow therapy with bolus material);
- tabulate or interpret results and observations of feeding and swallowing evaluations performed by SLPs;
- participate in formal parent conferences, case conferences, or any interdisciplinary team without the presence of the supervising SLP or other designated SLP;

Limitations on SLPA Scope

- provide interpretative information to the student/patient/client, family, or others regarding the patient/client status or service;
- write, develop, or modify a student’s, patient’s, or client’s treatment plan in any way;
- assist with students, patients, or clients without following the individualized treatment plan prepared by the certified SLP and/or without access to supervision;
- sign any formal documents (e.g., treatment plans, reimbursement forms, or reports; the SLPA should sign or initial informal treatment notes for review and co-sign with the supervising SLP as requested);
- select students, patients, or clients for service;
- discharge a student, patient, or client from services;

Limitations on SLPA Scope

- make referrals for additional service;
- disclose clinical or confidential information either orally or in writing to anyone other than the supervising SLP (the SLPA must comply with current HIPPA and FERPA guidelines) unless mandated by law;
- develop or determine the swallowing strategies or precautions for patients, family, or staff;
- treat medically fragile students/patients/clients independently;
- design or select augmentative and alternative communication systems or devices.
Supervision of SLPAs

- The amount and type of supervision required should be based on:
  - Skills and experience of the SLPA
  - The needs of the patient/client/student served
  - The service setting
  - The tasks assigned
  - Other factors

Supervising SLP

- Holds a CCC in SLP from ASHA and/or state licensure
- Have an active interest in the use of and desire to use support personnel
- Practiced SLP for at least 2 years following ASHA certification
- Have completed, or be currently enrolled in, at least one course or workshop in supervision for at least 1 CEU

Supervision of SLPAs

- Currently ASHA suggests 30% weekly (at least 20% direct) for the first 90 days
- Direct supervision is defined as on-site, in-view observation and guidance by a certified SLP while an assigned activity is performed by an SLPA
ASHA’s Ad Hoc Committee for Scope of Practice for SLPAs

- Reduction in number of full time SLPAs that may be supervised from three to two
- Addition of telepractice

ASHA Practice Portal SLPA Team

Key Issues:
- Education
- Supervision
- Ethical Obligations
- Reimbursement for Services
- State and Federal Regulations
- Affiliation with ASHA
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Definitions
  - [www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Speech-Language-Pathology-Assistants/](www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Speech-Language-Pathology-Assistants/)

ASHA Practice Portal Audiology Assistants

Key Issues
- Education and Training
- Supervision
- Ethical Obligations for Audiology Assistants and their supervisors
- Reimbursement for Services Provided by Audiology Assistants
- State and Federal Regulations
- Affiliation with ASHA
- Definitions
  - [www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Audiology-Assistants/](www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Audiology-Assistants/)
Use of SLPAs

- SLPAs are used in many states and in a variety of settings including:
  - Schools
  - Hospitals
  - Private settings
  - Early intervention
  - Other

Medicare Reimbursement

- Medicare policy currently does not recognize SLPAs, regardless of the level of supervision.
- Medicare does not reimburse for speech-language pathology assistant services.
- Private insurers may cover licensed or registered speech–language pathology assistants.
  - One must query each payer to verify coverage.

Medicaid Reimbursement

- Medicaid reimbursement for SLPA services varies
  - 10 states allow it in their state plan
  - Some allow for SLPA billing in education settings
  - No pattern in the states
  - Oklahoma example
Support Personnel Trends

- School Support Personnel Trends Chart
  www.asha.org/advocacy/state/StateLicensureTrends

- Support Personnel Trends Chart—Outside of School Settings
  www.asha.org/advocacy/state/StateLicensureTrends

Model Language for SLPAs
**ASHA Affiliates Program**

"Associates" are speech-language pathology assistants who are eligible to join ASHA under an affiliation program.

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**What are the Requirements for joining as an Associate?**

- Potential applicants will be required to obtain the signature of their ASHA certified supervisors in order to become ASHA Associates.
- If applicants are not employed, they will have to obtain the signature of their program director (or training program instructor) certifying that they are qualified to provide services under the direction of a CCC-SLP or CCC-A.
- Applicants will have to agree to follow all ASHA policies related to responsibilities and supervision of support personnel.

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**More Associate Requirements**

- Applicants will have to agree to practice only under the supervision of ASHA-Certified SLPs or Audiologists.
- Applicants will have to pay annual fees to maintain their affiliation.
- Applicants will also have to be qualified to practice in their state and follow the state licensure rules (if any) that are applicable to them.
ASHA Associates

› For more information about ASHA’s Associate’s program go to:
  ▪ www.asha.org/Members/Associate-Affiliation/
  ▪ associates@asha.org

ASHA Resources

› Speech–Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice
  www.asha.org/policy/SP2013–00337/

› ASHA Associates Program: ASHA SLP Professional Summit Report

› Support Personnel State Trends

› Support Personnel Requirements State–by–State
  www.asha.org/advocacy/state/

ASHA Resources

› Model Language for SLPAs and Audiology Assistants
  www.asha.org/advocacy/state/state–policy/

› Technical Training Programs for SLPAs
What Will Your Next Steps Be For Support Personnel?