Speech Language Pathologist

Overview

Speech-language pathologists assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent speech, language, cognitive, communication, voice, swallowing, fluency, and other related disorders; this profession is closely allied with - but separate from - audiology. For more information on these both speech-language pathology and audiology, see the "Students" section of the ASHA Website.

Speech-language pathologists work with people who cannot make speech sounds, or cannot make them clearly; those with speech rhythm and fluency problems, such as stuttering; people with voice quality problems, such as inappropriate pitch or harsh voice; those with problems understanding and producing language; those who wish to improve their communication skills by modifying an accent; and those with cognitive communication impairments, such as attention, memory, and problem solving disorders. They also work with people who have oral motor problems causing eating and swallowing difficulties.

To learn more, watch the video profile of "Speech Language Pathologists." To meet a speech language pathologist and find out what it's like to work in this field, see the NIH "Lifeworks" website.

Working Conditions

Speech-language pathologists work in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, schools, skilled nursing facilities, and private practices. The job is not physically demanding, but it does require attention to detail, specialized knowledge and skills, and intense concentration. The emotional needs of clients and their families may be demanding. Most full-time speech-language pathologists work 40 hours per week; some work part time. Those who work on a contract basis may spend a substantial amount of time traveling between facilities.

Academic Requirements

If you plan to become a certified practitioner in this field, you must attend a graduate program that has been accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA).

For a list of CAA-accredited programs, see the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Website. Search for schools that provide training for this career.

Almost all states require speech-language pathologists to hold at least a master's degree or the equivalent. Other requirements typically include 275 to 375 hours of supervised clinical practice, a passing score on a national examination, and 9 months of supervised professional experience. Individuals with a graduate degree from a CAA-accredited program and who have met other requirements which typically include 275 to 375 hours of supervised clinical practice, a passing score on a national examination, and a 9 months of supervised professional experience may be eligible for certification by the Council for Clinical Certification which issues the CCC-SLP. Forty-two States have continuing education requirements for licensure renewal.

Medicaid, Medicare, and private health insurers generally require a practitioner to be certified or licensed to qualify for reimbursement.
Professional Associations
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- American Medical Association

Funding Opportunities
- Search for funding opportunities in this field

Enrichment Programs
- Search for enrichment programs in this field

Schools and Academic Programs
- Search for academic degree and certificate programs in this field

Source
- http://www.asha.org/

Learn more about this field:
- Speech-Language-Hearing