

(swallowing), and auditory-oral/auditory-verbal skill development for children with cochlear implants.

In addition, a speech-language pathologist should be up-to-date in his/her knowledge of both general and special education, including education standards, curriculum, state and local assessments, parental rights and responsibilities, and special education requirements and procedure. The Virginia Department of Education publishes guidance documents on a number of topics that may be of interest to school-based speech-language pathologists. Guidance documents, available online at [www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov), address topics such as the evaluation and eligibility process, specific disability areas such as student with autism spectrum disorders or those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and special education topics such as extended school year and resolving disputes. Speech-language pathologists are encouraged to access VDOE guidance documents when appropriate. A listing of documents is provided in Appendix A of this document.

## Speech-Language Pathologists

All students who have IEPs that specify the provision of speech-language services must receive those services by a qualified speech-language pathologist (Virginia Special Education Regulations, 8 VAC 20-81-40). The Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology license types are based on education in field of speech-language pathology, with clinical experience (tracking the requirements for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology offered

by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association). Speech-language pathologists in the schools must hold a valid license issued by the Virginia Department of Health Profession's Board of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology. Speech-language pathologists serving students in schools may have a full license, school only license, or a provisional license. Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology regulations required that "The holder of a provisional license in audiology shall only practice under the supervision of a licensed audiologist, and the holder of a provisional license in speech-language pathology shall only practice under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist (18VAC 30 21 70 D)." Those providing supervision must adhere to specific regulatory requirements and notify the Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (18VAC 30 21 70 E).

The IDEA requires that personnel providing services to students with disabilities be qualified and hold the necessary credentials required by the state education agency. In addition, IDEA specifies that qualified professionals conduct assessments and that the decisions regarding a student's eligibility for special education include personnel representing the discipline providing the assessments. In addition, **Virginia Special Education Regulations** specify that the special education provider on the IEP Team will be a speech-language pathologist for students whose only disability is speech-language impairment.

Licensed speech-language pathologists may provide supervision for speech-language pathology assistants. To provide supervision for clinical fellows or university students in the school

setting, SLPs must have national certification through American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA).

Effective January 2020, ASHA requires clinical supervisors and clinical fellowship mentors have nine months of experience after being awarded the CCC-SLP and two hours of professional development in the area of supervision. Additionally, effective for the 2020-2022 certification renewal, all CCC-SLPs will be required to have one hour of continuing education in ethics.

## Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

Some divisions use assistants to support the speech-language pathologist. The **Virginia Administrative Code** addresses the qualifications of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs), scope of practice for SLPAs, and supervisory responsibilities of the licensed SLP (18 VAC 30 21 140). The Virginia Administrative Code (18 VAC 30 20 140) addresses documentation of supervisory responsibilities, frequency of the supervising speech-language pathologist personally delivering treatment or services to the student, and disclosure of the unlicensed assistant to student and family.

The Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology has regulations to clarify the scope of practice and duties not permitted by SLPAs. The SLPA is not allowed to practice independently and must be supervised by qualified staff. Given these restrictions, the following list reflects some of the tasks a speech-language assistant may assume:

- Assist with speech, language, and hearing screenings without clinical interpretation of results.

<sup>2</sup> The specific requirements are reflected in the Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology regulations found at <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/aud>.

- Perform activities for each session that are routine and do not require professional judgment, in accordance with a plan developed and directed by the speech-language pathologist who retains the professional responsibility for the student.
- Document a student's performance and report information to the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- Assist with preparing materials and programming augmentative and alternative communication devices
- Assisting students with transitioning to and from therapy sessions and clerical duties.

Speech-language pathology assistants may not be used to provide services to the caseload in the absence of qualified speech-language pathologists. A speech-language pathologist with an assistant may serve more students than the division average, but not higher than the caseload maximum of 68 (8 VAC 20-81-340). School divisions may consider the addition of a speech-language assistant to facilitate the completion of nonclinical duties and serve as a recruitment and retention tool.

For further information on using special education paraprofessionals, see the Virginia Department of Education document, *The Virginia Paraprofessional Guide to Supervision and Collaboration: A Partnership*.

## Substitutes

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has addressed the impact of an interruption of services on the student's right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). In addressing an inquiry in this regard, OSEP stated that in order to meet its FAPE responsibilities, a school division is generally responsible for making alternative arrangements to provide services set out in a student's IEP when there is an interruption of services. This may be due to the absence of the service provider or other school-related activities. However, the school division is not obligated to do so when the student is unavailable for other reasons, such as absences from school.

Given these requirements, school divisions face significant challenges when they have vacant positions or temporary absences. Every effort should be made to secure a qualified speech-language pathologist. School divisions should maintain an open job announcement for a qualified speech-language pathologist for ongoing recruitment efforts. The division may wish to contract with a private agency to provide services, assuring that their personnel hold a license from the Virginia Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. In addition, divisions should recruit a pool of qualified speech-language pathology substitutes to cover caseloads during short- or long-term absences. (Retired speech-language pathologists may be a valuable pool for substitutes or part-time personnel.)

For short-term absences, speech-language pathologists should take advantage of the flexibility written into the IEP for scheduling services to enable them to reschedule the student at another time. However, when

rescheduling, the division must ensure that the student does not receive any reduction in the services specified on the IEP.

For long-term interruption of services, the division must inform the parents of students who are not served or underserved of the interruption of services. The interruption may be due to a vacancy or medical leave. The parents must be assured that once the services resume, the IEP team will determine if the student is entitled to compensatory services. The compensatory services may be provided during the summer, during school breaks, or by providing additional time during the school year. Division speech-language pathologists may provide these services and should be appropriately compensated for working additional hours.

Nonqualified substitutes shall not conduct assessments, write evaluation reports, prepare IEPs, represent speech-language pathology at meetings, or teach new skills. These tasks are reserved for qualified speech-language pathologists.

## Supervision and Mentoring

### Supervision

Speech-language pathologists may be supervised by a variety of persons within a school division: principal, special education director, speech-language pathology coordinator, or lead speech-language pathologist. The supervisor may not be familiar with the field of speech-language pathology and may come from a different background in general or special education.

The speech-language pathologist has the responsibility to provide his/her supervisor with sufficient information

## Language Assessment Summary

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review all assessment data prior to completing this form. For each assessment area column, circle the item that best represents the student's performance. When a valid comparison to a normative sample cannot be made or a student has significant impairments, consider completion of the Functional Communication Summary form.

	<b>Academic Activities</b>  Data sources include classwork, homework, and observations of oral, written and pragmatic language in school settings	<b>Academic Tests and Measurements</b>  Data sources include achievement tests, SOL, benchmark tests, and pre-referral intervention data	<b>Speech-Language Pathology Probes</b>  Data sources include language samples, interviews, case history and dynamic assessment data	<b>Speech-Language Pathology Norm-Referenced Tests and Measurements</b>  Data sources include multiple norm-referenced tests with appropriate sensitivity and specificity
<b>No Apparent Impact</b>	Performs similarly to peers in most areas	Performs similarly to peers in most areas	May indicate differences from Standard American English Demonstrates improvements during dynamic assessment	1 or 2 composite scores* at or above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mean to -1 SD</li> <li>• <math>\geq 85</math> SS #</li> <li>• <math>\geq 17^{\text{th}}</math> %ile</li> </ul>
<b>Minimal Impact</b>	Evidence of struggle with one or more areas when compared to peers  Evidence of occasional difficulty with 'meta' skills	Evidence of struggle with one or more areas when compared to peers	May indicate differences from Standard American English Demonstrates improvements during dynamic assessment Occasional difficulty with pragmatic, semantic or syntax- morphological skills	1 or 2 composite scores* documenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -1 to -1.5SD</li> <li>• 84 to 77 SS #</li> <li>• 16<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> %ile</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Impact</b>	Evidence of struggle in most areas when compared to peers  Evidence of difficulty with 'meta' skills	Evidence of struggle in most areas when compared to peers	Demonstrates limited improvement during dynamic assessment Frequent difficulty with pragmatic, semantic or syntax- morphological skills	1 or 2 composite scores* documenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -1.5 to -2 SD</li> <li>• 76-70 SS #</li> <li>• 6<sup>th</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> %ile</li> </ul>
<b>Substantial Impact</b>	Evidence of very limited ability in most areas Evidence limited or absence of 'meta' skills	Evidence of very limited ability in most areas	Demonstrates very limited improvement during dynamic assessment Extensive difficulty with pragmatic, semantic or syntax- morphological skills	1 or 2 composite scores* documenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -2 or greater SD</li> <li>• 69 or below SS #</li> <li>• below 3<sup>rd</sup> %ile</li> </ul>

\*These scores should be composite scores from the full battery of subtests, not individual subtest scores.

# This example assumes a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15 points. See page 29.