

Position Statement on Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) Supervision in California Schools

Introduction:

There is currently no regulation specifying the percentage or duration of supervision required for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) beyond the initial 90-day licensure period. This lack of clear guidelines has resulted in inconsistent practices among some employers, potentially undermining ethical supervision standards. Without established parameters, there is a risk that SLPAs may not receive the necessary support, which could lead to challenges for the assistants, their supervising Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs), and the clients they serve.

This statement outlines the California Speech and Hearing Association's (CSHA) position regarding the supervision of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) by direct hire, contracting companies and agencies, Nonpublic Schools (NPS), and third parties in California schools.

Purpose:

The goal of this position statement is to ensure quality service delivery to students with communication disorders while maintaining professional standards, ethical considerations and compliance with state regulations by providing:

- **Guidance to Employers:** Provide clear expectations and guidelines on what effective and ethical supervision should entail, ensuring that SLPAs receive the necessary supervision to perform their roles effectively.
- **Support to SLPAs:** Empower SLPAs to advocate for appropriate and adequate supervision, enabling them to deliver high-quality services with confidence and integrity.

The following are recommendations from CSHA for best practice for SLPA

supervision in California schools.

Supervision Guidelines:

Effective supervision of SLPAs is critical for student progress and professional growth. The following guidelines should be adhered to::

- **Scope of Practice:** [SLPAs should perform only tasks delegated by the supervising SLP that are within their scope of practice as defined by California law and regulations.](#)
- **Responsibility Statement for Supervisors of SLPAs:**
https://www.speechandhearing.ca.gov/forms_pubs/resp_stmt.pdf
- **Direct and Indirect Supervision:** A combination of direct and indirect supervision is necessary. Direct supervision should include observation of the SLPA providing therapy and feedback sessions. Length of direct supervision (besides first 90 days of licensure) should correlate to SLPAs experience and comfort level. Indirect supervision includes review of data collection and treatment plans.
- **FIRST 90 DAYS of initial CA licensure:** the direct supervision requirement is 20% of the SLPAs work schedule per week.
- **Minimum supervision for experienced SLPAs (at least one year of experience):** 1 hour per week with Direct supervision at least once every 30 days
- **Minimum supervision for new SLPAs (after initial 90 days but less than a year experience):** 10% per month with Direct supervision at least once every 30 days
- **Supervising SLP should have first contact or be familiar with every student their SLPA directly services.**
- **Supervising SLP should have IEP access to every student their SLPA is providing services for.**
- **Frequency of Supervision:** The frequency of supervision should be determined based on the SLPA's experience, skill level, and the complexity of the caseload. However, supervision requirements as specified by California law should always be met.
- **Documentation:** All supervision activities, including observations, feedback sessions, and delegated tasks, should be documented thoroughly and maintained for compliance purposes. The SLP must document supervisory activities and adjust the amount and type of

supervision to ensure that the Code of Ethics and Assistants Code of Conduct are followed.

Best Practices Beyond Minimums

Many organizations opt to exceed minimum requirements to ensure quality clinical care and ethical supervision practices:

- **Biweekly check-ins** even if not required
- **Observation of therapy sessions monthly**
- **Ongoing feedback**
- **Collaboration in progress monitoring, data tracking, and communication with families**

Responsibilities of Supervising SLPs:

Supervising SLPs play a pivotal role in ensuring quality service delivery. Their responsibilities include:

- Assigning tasks to SLPAs based on their competency and training.
- Developing and reviewing treatment plans for students receiving services from SLPAs associated with the supervising SLPs state license/credential.
- Providing consistent feedback to the SLPAs they supervise on their performance and professional development.
- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the speech-language pathology assistant's clinical work aligns with their training and experience. They are also accountable for all assigned tasks performed by the assistant.
- Supervisors are responsible for reviewing student records, monitoring and evaluating the assistant's ability to provide services to the student at the service setting, and ensuring compliance with all laws and regulations governing speech-language pathology practice.
- Ensuring that SLPs supervising and working with SLPAs adhere to ethical guidelines and confidentiality requirements.
- Maintaining accurate records of supervision activities and student progress.

Benefits of Effective SLPA Supervision:

Effective supervision of SLPAs leads to numerous benefits:

- Increased access to speech-language services for students in schools.
- Enhanced efficiency in service delivery by allowing SLPs to focus on more complex tasks.
- Providing support for Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) caseloads without increasing the existing caseload.
- Professional growth and skill development for SLPAs.
- Improved student outcomes and progress in communication skills.

Recommendations:

- Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for both SLPs and SLPAs.
- Develop clear protocols and guidelines for SLPA supervision within school districts.
- Establish mentorship programs to support newly certified SLPAs and supervising SLPs.
- Regularly review and update supervision practices to reflect current research and best practices.

Conclusion:

CSHA supports the utilization of SLPAs in California schools under ethical supervision. It is imperative that all parties involved adhere to state regulations and professional guidelines to ensure the delivery of high-quality speech-language services to students. By prioritizing effective supervision, we can maximize the benefits of SLPAs while upholding the highest standards of practice.

Developed by the CSHA SLPA Committee in collaboration with SLPAs and SLPs.

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