



Utah State Board of Education

Handbook for Speech-Language Technicians Working in Utah Public Schools



Sydney Dickson, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

250 E 500 S
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

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Foreword

The Utah State Board of Education has created the Speech-Language Technician license area of concentration for an individual who has completed a Board-approved bachelor's degree in communication disorders at an accredited higher education institution *and* additional training as approved by the USBE. This individual will work under the direction of a qualified speech-language pathologist.

The purpose of this action was to meet the state education agency's responsibility to provide appropriate speech-language services to students with disabilities in the State of Utah in the face of critical local and national shortages of qualified speech-language pathologists.

The roles and responsibilities of the supervising speech-language pathologist (SLP) and the speech-language technician (SLT) are outlined in this handbook.

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Laurel Brown	Utah State Board of Education
Dawnne Casey	Provo School District
Cheri Cornaby	Nebo School District
Rebecca Garda	Jordan School District
Nan Gray	Utah State Board of Education
Kay Healey	Weber School District
Gail Johnson	Utah State Board of Education
David McPherson	Brigham Young University
Ann Miller	Weber School District
Helen Post	Utah Parent Center
Marilyn Price-Larson	Salt Lake School District
Delaine Qawasmeh	Provo School District
Bruce Schroeder	Utah State Board of Education
Larry Shumway	Utah State Board of Education
Vicki Simonsmeier	Utah Speech/Hearing Association
Jocelyn Taylor	Utah State Board of Education
Ray Timothy	Utah State Board of Education

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Cheri Cornaby	Nebo School District
Jennifer Hefti	

Roles and Responsibilities of the Supervising Speech-Language Pathologist

Supervising speech-language pathologists (SLPs) are to fulfill roles as outlined in professional and state standards. They are also expected to adhere to the following supervision ratios, general management policies, and professional development approved by the USBE:

- I. Supervision Ratios. The speech-language pathologist shall:
 - A. Supervise no more than three SLTs concurrently. Although more than one SLP may provide supervision for an SLT, the SLP should not supervise or be listed as a supervisor for more than three SLTs.
 - B. Have clinical responsibilities that are balanced with the supervisory responsibility for the SLTs. Although direct student contact may decrease for the supervising SLP, student services must remain appropriate to individualized needs documented on the IEP.
 - C. Have clinical responsibilities that decrease as the supervisory responsibilities of the SLP increase.
 - D. Be included in discussions and decisions regarding the number of SLTs whom he or she supervises. The LEA shall determine the level of supervision necessary to ensure a free appropriate public education.
 - E. Communicate with other supervisors on a regular basis when multiple supervisors are used.

- II. General Management. The speech-language pathologist shall:
 - A. Be a SLP currently licensed by the USBE and preferably certified by ASHA (CCC) who has been practicing for at least two years following licensure. (Graduate student interns are never eligible to supervise a SLT.)
 - B. Use the SLT only when appropriate. Assure that the SLT only performs tasks within the approved job responsibilities of the SLT.
 - C. Be the responsible party for seeing that the needs of the students who are served by the SLT are met.
 - D. Provide at least the minimum amount of supervision necessary for the SLTs in the work setting and environment, as defined in the "Amount of Supervision" section of this document.
 - E. Document appropriate supervision of the SLT.
 - F. Disclose to students, parents, and staff that the SLT is working with the student under SLP supervision.
 - G. Be the representative in all collaborative, interdisciplinary, and interagency meetings, correspondence, and reports.

- H. Make clinical decisions, including the determination of student selection or inclusion/exclusion on the caseload and dismissal of students from treatment. Communicate with students, parents, family members, guardians, and staff about diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment plan.
- I. Conduct diagnostic evaluations, assessments, or appraisals, and interpret obtained data in reports.
- J. Review the individual treatment plan and progress with the SLT at least weekly.
- K. Delegate specific tasks to the technician while retaining legal and ethical responsibility for all student services provided or omitted.
- L. Prepare an individualized treatment plans and make modifications prior to or during implementation.
- M. Refer the case as appropriate to other professionals.
- N. Sign all formal documents (e.g., evaluation reports, IEPs, treatment plans, reimbursement forms and reports). The supervisor should indicate on the documents which activities were performed by the SLT.
- O. Review and sign all informal progress notes prepared by the SLT.
- P. Participate in the performance appraisal of the SLT.

III. Professional Development.

- A. The SLP shall have completed a USBE-approved professional development course in supervision.
- B. The SLP shall document training of the SLT and provide ongoing on-the-job training to the SLT.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Speech-Language Technician

Speech-language technicians are to fulfill roles as outlined in professional and state standards. They are also expected to adhere to the following supervision ratios, general management policies, and professional development courses approved by the USBE:

- I. Amount of Supervision. The speech-language technician shall:
 - A. Receive a minimum of 30 percent supervision during the work week (at least 20 percent direct) for the first 90 workdays and 20 percent supervision during the work week (at least 10 percent direct) after the first 90 workdays. (Direct supervision is on-site, in-view observation and guidance by the SLP while an assigned activity is performed by the SLT.)
 - B. Receive more supervision depending on the complexity of the students' needs and the experience and skills of the SLT.
 - C. Perform therapy tasks only when a supervising speech-language pathologist can be reached by personal contact, phone, or other immediate means. If for any reason (i.e., maternity leave, illness, change of jobs) the supervising speech-language pathologist is no longer available to provide the level of supervision stipulated, the technician shall not perform therapy tasks until a licensed speech-language pathologist has been designated as the technician's supervisor.
- II. General Management. The speech-language technician shall:
 - A. Represent himself or herself as a SLT working under the supervision of an SLP.
 - B. Assist with speech, language, and hearing screenings, without interpretation.
 - C. Assist with informal documentation (i.e., logs) as directed by the SLP.
 - D. Follow documented treatment plans or protocols developed by the supervising SLP.
 - E. Document student performance and report to the supervising SLP.
 - F. Assist the SLP while the SLP performs assessments/evaluations on students.
 - G. Assist with clerical duties and departmental operations (i.e., scheduling, record keeping, materials preparation, safety and maintenance of supplies and equipment).
 - H. Support the supervising SLP in research projects, in-service training, and public relations programs.
 - I. Collect data for monitoring quality improvement.
 - J. Collect data for compliance with regulations and reimbursement requirements.
 - K. Not provide supervision to other employees or volunteers.
 - L. Not provide services outside the public school assignment.

- M. Not perform evaluations on students or interpret results of evaluations independently.
- N. Not screen students for feeding/swallowing, acquired brain injury, or autism.
- O. Not be assigned a caseload. The caseload belongs to the supervising SLP who is legally responsible for the student's program development and implementation.
- P. Not participate in parent conferences, case conferences, or any interdisciplinary team meeting without the presence of the supervising SLP or designee. The SLT shall represent himself/herself as a technician only.
- Q. Not write, develop, or modify a student's individualized treatment plan or IEP in any way; however, the SLT may present information as directed by the supervising SLP during an IEP meeting.
- R. Not provide services to students without following the IEP or treatment plan prepared by the SLP, or without immediate access to the supervisor who shall direct the services.
- S. Not represent himself/herself as a SLP on formal documents (i.e., IEPs, treatment plans, reimbursement forms, or reports).
- T. Not determine student eligibility for services.
- U. Not dismiss students from services.
- V. Not disclose clinical or confidential information, either orally or in writing, to anyone without the supervising SLP's permission.
- W. Not make referrals for additional services.
- X. Not counsel or consult with the student, family, or others regarding the student's status, progress, or service without the supervising SLP's express permission.
- Y. Not screen, evaluate, demonstrate strategies or treat students with feeding/swallowing disorders.
- Z. Not represent himself/herself as a SLP, but as a SLT working under the supervision of a SLP.
- AA. Not participate in the hiring of other paraeducators, other SLTs, or SLPs.

III. Professional Development.

- A. The SLT shall receive USBE-approved training to meet core competencies outlined in this document, which include (a) supporting instructional and therapeutic opportunities, (b) demonstrating professionalism and ethical practices, (c) supporting a positive learning environment, and (d) communicating effectively and participating in the team process.
- B. Each LEA shall provide the SLT with an adequate onsite practicum experience before assuming the duties of a SLT.

Competencies of the Supervising Speech-Language Pathologist

Supervising speech-language pathologists and speech-language technicians will demonstrate skill and knowledge competency standards in order to provide speech-language services in the school.

The supervising speech-language pathologist shall have the knowledge and skills to:

- I. Know, understand and adhere to the ethical standards of both the education agency and the profession of Speech/Language Pathology.
- II. Create a session plan to be implemented by the SLT.
- III. Supervise the SLT:
 - A. Select and assign appropriate students to the SLT.
 - B. Determine the nature of supervision that is appropriate for each SLT and consistent with this document.
 - C. Establish and maintain an effective relationship with the SLT.
 - D. Direct the SLT regarding screening protocols.
 - E. Demonstrate for and participate with the SLT in the clinical process.
 - F. Direct the SLT in following individualized treatment plans.
 - G. Direct the SLT in the maintenance of clinical records.
 - H. Interact with the SLT in planning and executing supervisory conferences.
 - I. Provide feedback to the SLT regarding skills.
 - J. Assist the SLT in developing skills of verbal reporting and assigned informal written reporting to the SLP.
 - K. Assist the SLT in effectively selecting, preparing, and presenting treatment materials and organizing treatment environments.
 - L. Share information regarding ethical, legal, and regulatory, aspects of professional practice.
 - M. Model and facilitate professional conduct.
 - N. Direct the SLT in the implementation of research procedures, in-service training activities, and public relations programs.
 - O. Train the SLT to check and maintain equipment and to observe universal precautions.
 - P. Assist the SLT in using appropriate language (oral and written) when interacting with patients/clients and others.
 - Q. Establish a system of accountability for document use and supervision of the SLT.

IV. Conduct the Performance Evaluation of the SLT.

- A. Provide formative and summative evaluation of therapy sessions.
- B. Conduct annual performance evaluation.
- C. Evaluate the supervisory process.

Competencies of the Speech-Language Technician

The speech-language technician shall:

- I. Support instructional and therapeutic opportunities.
 - A. Have knowledge and proficiency in:
 1. Basic phonological awareness and development remediation.
 2. Basic articulation remediation.
 3. Basic receptive and expressive language remediation.
 - B. Have knowledge of strategies, techniques, and delivery methods of instruction.
 - C. Deliver therapy according to the SLP's session treatment plan.
 - D. Record data about the student.
 - E. Organize material and support learning during the instructional process.
- II. Demonstrate professional and ethical practices.
 - A. Have knowledge and adhere to the distinctions in the roles and responsibilities of the student's education team.
 - B. Adhere to all pertinent laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- III. Support a positive learning environment.
 - A. Use proactive management strategies to engage students.
 - B. Support the student's behavior management plan.
- IV. Communicate effectively and participate in the team process.
 - A. Serve as a member of an instruction team.
 - B. Use effective communication skills (written, verbal, and nonverbal).

Professional Development

LEAs will ensure that supervising speech-language pathologists and speech-language technicians have received USBE-approved professional development in order to meet the supervision and service delivery competencies outlined in this document. As a part of this professional development program, the speech-language technician shall successfully complete a practicum experience, including receiving instruction, observation of a variety of therapy opportunities, and demonstration of skill.