



Our purpose:

Effective communication skills greatly affect education, employment, and the quality of life of many Texans. The estimated two million Texans with communication disorders deserve the services of highly qualified speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists.

Where we work:

SLPs and audiologists work with children and adults in a variety of settings – hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, Early Childhood Intervention programs, long-term facilities, and private practices, with the largest percentage (48%) working in the public schools.

Need for more highly qualified personnel in medical and rehabilitation settings:

As members of the baby-boom generation continue to age, the possibility of neurological disorders and associated speech, language, hearing, and swallowing impairments increases. Medical advances are fortunately improving the survival rate for trauma and strokes, which by nature increases the need for quality rehabilitative speech, language, and swallowing services. It is critical that all Texans are afforded insurance benefits covering speech-language pathology disorders and treatments.

Need for more highly qualified personnel in schools:

Schools are seeing an increase in the severity and complexity of disorders, and there must be greater awareness of the importance of early identification and intervention. School-based SLPs and audiologists are now treating more children with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol, craniofacial anomalies, syndromes, emotional disturbance, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) along with more common speech-language disorders. Medical advances are improving the survival rate of premature babies. In light of the closure of state schools, students once institutionalized are now served in public schools. And students returning to school after injury or illness often have cognitive, language, and feeding/swallowing difficulties that must be treated.

Importance of services in schools:

Nearly 10% of children entering school have speech, language, and/or hearing problems which will affect their reading skills, school achievement and behavior. Depending on the severity of the disorder, 50% to 70% will experience academic difficulty through grade 12. But this can be prevented: a child's academic performance and overall success can be improved through the early identification of communication disorders and appropriate intervention.

We need your help! To ensure that the above objectives are met, your legislative support is greatly needed, particularly in the areas of:

- Maintaining current standards and continuing regulation through licensure during Sunset Review in 2011
- Supporting loan repayment for graduate students (Master's in SLP, AuD for audiology, PhD for those desiring to teach in university communication disorders programs)
- Supporting legislation that affords all Texans the legal right to speech-language pathology benefits
- Providing funding for university programs to expand and increase enrollment

Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association

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Effective Communication for Life

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