Training, Use and Supervision of SLP Assistants: What Every Speech-Language Pathologist Needs to Know

Janet Deppe, MS CCC-SLP
Director, State Advocacy
SDSLHA Convention
October 9, 2014

Disclosure
Janet Deppe, Director State Advocacy

• Financial: I am a paid employee of ASHA
• Non-Financial: I am an ASHA member, I support ASHA’s Public Policy Agenda which includes the advocacy initiatives that the association supports; I am the ex-officio of ASHA’s School Finance Committee which advocates for increased financial support and other non-financial initiatives for school-based ASHA members.

Overview

• ASHA State Liaisons
• Definition of SLPAs and Support Personnel
• ASHA’s History with Support Personnel
• Speech-Language Pathology Professional Summit
• Education, Regulation, Use and Supervision of SLPAs
• ASHA’s Scope of Practice for SLPAs
• Practice Resource Project and Use of Support Personnel
• ASHA Documentation: State by State Trends
• Reimbursement
• ASHA Web Resources
• State examples
• ASHA Affiliates Program
• Scenarios

State Outreach Map

ASHA State Outreach Model

• Northeast Region – MA, NH, VT, NY, RI, CT, NJ, PA, DE, MD, OH, MI, DC
Susan Adams sadams@asha.org 800-498-2071, ext. 5665

• South Region – VA, WV, KY, NC, TN, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, AR
Cheri Frailey cfrailey@asha.org 800-498-2071, ext. 5666

• Central Region – ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, TX, MO, IA, MN, WI, IL, IN, MI
Janet Deppe jdeppe@asha.org 800-498-2071, ext. 5668

• West Region – HI, AK, CA, OR, WA, NV, ID, UT, AZ, NM, CO, WY, MT, Overseas
Eileen Crowe ecrowe@asha.org 800-498-2071, ext. 5667

Definition of a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA)

• Speech-language pathology assistants are support personnel who, following academic and/or on-the-job training, perform tasks prescribed, directed, and supervised by certified speech-language pathologists.
• Definitions of SLPAs and other support personnel vary in states
• Speech-language pathology assistants have been used and regulated by many states since the 1970s. ASHA has had guidelines for the use of support personnel since 1969
ASHA History with SLPAs

- Speech-language pathology assistants have been used and regulated by many states since the 1970s. ASHA has had guidelines for the use of support personnel since 1969
- 1967: ASHA created the Committee on Support Personnel
- 1969 – the LC approved the Guidelines for the Communicative Aide
- 1979: the Ethical Practice Board issues an Ethics statement on support personnel
- 1981: the Guidelines for Employment and Utilization of support personnel was developed
- 1990-91: the 1967 committee sunsettled and the Task force on Support Personnel was created

Speech-Language Pathology Service Continuum Summit

- Persistent shortage of SLPs particularly in education settings has led to the rise in establishment of competing standards
- California: Communication Development Specialist
- Minnesota: Academic Language and Behavioral Strategist
- Alternative standards allow lesser qualified individuals to practice independently
- ASHA’s BOD approved the development of a service delivery continuum summit which would identify practitioner roles, education, training and competency requirements.

Recommendations from the SLP Professional Summit

Six recommendations were approved by attendees and sent to ASHA’s BOD for consideration:
- ASHA should develop a shared lexicon
- ASHA should develop and publish a framework that articulates the range of acceptable practice across the different service provider levels
- ASHA should consider developing a comprehensive assessment consistent with its commitment to inclusion - A national examination ( for SLPAs) represents one such option

ASHA History with SLPAs

- 1994: the LC passed a resolution supporting the establishment of credentialing support personnel
- 1996-2000 Credentialing process developed
- 2002: Approval process for SLPAs programs
- 2003 -registration for SLPAs established, LC resolution discontinued the program
- 2004- Position statement revised
- 2007- SLP summit discussed consideration of a continuum and credentialing
- 2011 SLP Professional Service Continuum Summit

Speech-Language Pathology Professional Summit

- The SLP Professional Summit was created to bring together ASHA members from different geographic locations and academic backgrounds, who practice in a variety of settings to develop recommendations for a service continuum
- The summit was held July 22-23, 2011 in Alexandria VA.

Rudimentary Framework Model: SLP Summit 2011
Recommendations from the SLP Professional Summit

- ASHA should
  - develop model state regulatory language for the regulation of SLPAs
  - develop principles and protocols of effective supervision for both supervisors and those who require and benefit from supervision
  - form a task force, in cooperation with the Council of Academic Programs, to study the continuum of academic preparation and determine how the continuum can best support SLPA and SLP preparation

Speech-Language Pathology Professional Summit

- Results and recommendations from the summit are posted on the ASHA website at: www.asha.org/SLP/2011-SLP-Professional-Summit/

Education of SLPA

- State agencies (licensure boards) currently regulating support personnel have training requirements that range from a high school diploma to a baccalaureate degree plus graduate credit hours
- ASHA currently recommends completion of an associates or bachelor’s degree from an accredited training program
- Following the Professional Summit in July, participants recommended that ASHA develop additional resources for SLPs including guidance on the education required to serve as an assistant and training and responsibilities of the supervising SLP

Training of SLPA

- Training varies from state to state:
  - Some require additional fieldwork beyond the degree requirement;
  - others simply require on the job training post high school
  - other states may employ support personnel that are unregulated and have no academic or training requirement

Regulations of SLPAs in states

- States regulate assistants through:
  - Department of Health licensing/certification/registration
  - Department of Education certification/licensing
  - Some restrict practice to education settings only (KY)
  - At least 10 states do not regulate SLPA including WI, MI and NY
  - Many but not all states require continuing education for assistants ranging from 15 hours per year in KY to 5 hours per year in MD and 4 per year in SC.
  - Some mirror continuing education requirements in the state for SLPs 20/2 (FL, NJ and TX), and 10/1 (OK).

Use of SLPAs

SLPAs are used in a variety of settings including:

- Schools
- Hospitals
- Private Settings
- Early Intervention
- Other
Supervision of SLPAs

- The amount and type of supervision required should be based on:
  - skills and experience of the SLP
  - the needs of patients/clients served
  - the service setting
  - the tasks assigned
  - other factors

Who can Supervise SLPAs?

- ASHA suggests that an SLP supervisor be a speech-language pathologist certified by ASHA and licensed by the state (where applicable) who has been practicing for at least 2 years following ASHA certification
- ASHA also recommends that the SLP supervisor complete at least one pre-service course or continuing education unit in supervision.

Recommended Tasks of SLPAs

- Assist speech-language and hearing screenings (without interpretation)
- Assist with informal documentation as directed by the speech-language pathologist
- Follow documented treatment plans or protocols developed by the supervising speech-language pathologist
- Document patient/client performance (e.g., tallying data for the speech-language pathologist to use; preparing charts, records, and graphs) and report this information to the supervision speech-language pathologist

ASHA’s Ad Hoc Committee for Scope of Practice for SLPAs

- Recommendation from the 2011 Summit: Develop Scope of Practice Policy for SLPAs
- ASHA appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to develop SOP for SLPs
- The following summarizes the qualifications of the SLPAs approved by the BOD as policy of the association:
  - Completion of a 54 degree in CSD or 44 degree in an SLP program or equivalent course of study
  - Completion of 900 hours of clinical practice within the education and training program or supervised field work experience on the job
  - Adherence to SLP responsibilities/jurisdictions and refrain from tasks that are the sole responsibility of the SLP
  - Adherence to state licensing and regulatory rules governing the practice
  - Completion of required continuing education and or professional development activities
  - Guidance is also provided for allowable tasks, ethical considerations and SLP supervisory role

Recommended Tasks of SLPAs

- Assist the speech-language pathologist during assessment of patients/clients
- Assist with clerical duties such as preparing materials and scheduling activities as directed by the speech-language pathologist
- Perform checks and maintenance of equipment
- Support the supervising speech-language pathologist in research projects, in-service training, and public relations programs
Recommended Tasks of SLPAs

- Assist with departmental operations (scheduling, record keeping, safety/maintenance of supplies and equipment)
- Collect data for monitoring quality improvement
- Exhibit compliance with regulations, reimbursement requirements, and speech-language pathology assistant’s job responsibilities

Support Personnel Use

- is 20,644 in use* (Dec, 2012)

* figure obtained from ASHA dues renewal survey in which certified ASHA members are asked whether or not they supervise support personnel. Suspect the number in use is much higher than reported

Medicare Reimbursement

- Medicare policy currently does not recognize SLPAs, regardless of the level of supervision and does not reimburse for speech-language pathology assistant services. Private insurers may cover licensed or registered speech-language pathology assistants. One must query each payer to verify coverage.

Medicaid Reimbursement

- Medicaid reimbursement for SLPA services varies. About 10 states currently allow it in their state plan. Some states addressing the shortage of SLPs allow for SLPA billing in education settings. There does not seem to be a pattern in the states.
- Oklahoma Example - Rules currently prohibit Medicaid billing for services provided by SLPAs and student clinicians.

ASHA's Documentation on Support Personnel

- State-by-state requirements for SLPAs (support personnel)
- SLPA trends

ASHA Practice Portal on SLP Assistants

- Key Issues: covered on the Practice Portal
  - Education
  - Supervising
  - Ethical Obligations
  - Reimbursement for Services Provided by SLPAs
  - State and Federal Regulations
  - Affiliation with ASHA
  - Frequently Asked Questions
  - Definitions

http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Speech-Language-Pathology-Assistants/
Support Personnel Trends

Model Language for SLPAs and Audiology Assistants

- Education
- Supervision
- Continuing Education
- Title protection
- http://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/state-policy/

South Dakota SLPA Requirements

- SLPAs are included in the statute
- SLPAs must hold an AA or BA degree from an accredited institution
- SLPAs must complete 100 hours of clinical training as a speech-language pathology assistant either during academic preparation or during their first employment
- SLPAs must submit an official transcript verifying necessary academic preparation and clinical experiences
- SLPAs must have not committed any act for which disciplinary action is justified
- SLPAs must pay the fees established by the Board

South Dakota State Information

Other State Examples

Texas Licensing Requirements

- An applicant for an assistant in speech-language pathology must:
  - Possess a Bachelor’s degree in CSD from a university whose training program is accredited by ASHA or its agent
  - Have acquired 24 semester hours in SLP and/or audiology
  - Have earned at least 25 hours of clinical observation in SLP and 25 hours of clinical assisting experience in the area of SLP obtained within an educational institution or under the direct supervision at their place of employment
  - A licensed SLP shall assign duties and provide appropriate supervision to the assistant
  - A supervisory statement shall be completed by both the assistant and the supervisor who agrees to assume full responsibility for all services provided by the assistant
  - The licensed SLP supervisor will have practiced for at least three years and shall submit verification in writing

South Dakota

An assistant shall be supervised by a licensed SLP who has at least three years of experience as an SLP
- The supervising SLP
  - Is responsible for the extent, kind, and quality of service provided by the assistant, consistent with the board’s designated standards and requirements;
  - Shall ensure that persons receiving services from an assistant receive prior written notification that services are to be provided, in whole or in part, by an SLP;
  - May not supervise more than three SLPAs at one time
Texas Licensing Requirements

• The licensed supervisor shall in writing
  • determine the skills and assigned tasks the assistant is able to perform
  • notify the client or family that an assistant will be providing the services
  • Develop the plan of treatment
  • Maintain responsibility for all services provided

The licensed SLP assistant shall:
  • perform duties within their scope of practice

The assistant may not:
  • represent the SLP or attend staff and IEP (ARD) meetings without permission of the SLP except under certain circumstances

Oklahoma SLPA Requirements

• An SLPA must be licensed by the Board
  • An SLPA must hold an associate's degree from an accredited institution
  • Continuing education requirements that apply for SLPs also apply for SLPA
  • The board considers the following before granting a license:
    • Academic training and clinical experience
    • The specific duties and responsibilities assigned
    • The amount and nature of available supervision
    • The number of other persons assigned to the supervision

Oklahoma

• The assistant must practice in a geographic setting which permits on site direct supervision
• The SLPA license is granted for one year
• A licensed SLP may not supervise more than two assistants at one time
• Supervision and scope of duties follow ASHA guidelines

ASHA Affiliates Program

“Associates” are speech-language pathology assistants who are eligible to join ASHA under a new affiliation program.

Why an Associates Program?

• Assistants are a fact of life.
  • ASHA is taking a leadership role to help resolve issues with the proper use of assistants.
  • Helping to ensure a continuum of care for clients and patients.

What are the Requirements for Joining as an Associate?

• Potential applicants will be required to obtain the signature of their ASHA certified supervisors in order to become ASHA Associates.
  • If applicants are not employed, they will have to obtain the signature of their program director (or training program instructor) certifying that they are qualified to provide services under the direction of a CCC-SLP or CCC-A.
  • Applicants will have to agree to follow all ASHA policies related to responsibilities and supervision of support personnel.
  • Applicants will have to agree to practice only under the supervision of ASHA-Certified SLPs or Audiologists.
  • Applicants will have to pay annual fees to maintain their affiliation.
  • Applicants will also have to be qualified to practice in their state and follow the state licensure rules (if any) that are applicable to them.
What Benefits Do We Have for Associates?

- Networking opportunities with other assistants
- Affinity benefits
- Consultation provided by ASHA’s professional practices staff
- Listing and search capabilities on ASHA’s online Member and Affiliate Directory
- Opportunity to participate in advocacy efforts
- Opportunity to participate in mentoring programs
- Reduced registration fees for education programs and products
- Online Career Center
- Subscription to The ASHA Leader and access to The ASHA Leader Online (ALO)
- Access to four online scholarly journals
- Subscription to Associate e-newsletter
- Associate e-Group (listserv/forum/social network)
- Professional Development Hours (PDHs) for Associates

ASHA Associates

- For more information about ASHA’s new associates program go to: www.asha.org/associates/default/
- For other questions contact Janet Deppe, South Dakota state liaison at jdeppe@asha.org

ASHA Resources

- ASHA Associates Program: www.asha.org/associates/default/
- SLPA requirements state-by-state: www.asha.org/advocacy/states/
- Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice: http://www.asha.org/policy/SP2013-00337/

SLPA Scenarios: SLP Perspective

- Your administrator has asked you to supervise an additional full-time SLP who will be in a facility on the other side of the state that you have limited access to. You already supervise three. What should you do?

Scenario #2-SLP Perspective

You are an SLP supervising an SLPA that you would like to utilize to assist with a hearing screening. ASHA states that SLPA can assist with speech-language and hearing screenings (without interpretation). Does this mean that the SLPA can help me conduct the screenings? Can the SLPA complete the screening and give it to me for interpretation?

Scenario #3-SLPA Perspective

You’ve been an SLPA for 15 years in a local school. You’ve been responsible for planning, materials, data collection, input for goals & objectives according to student’s strengths and weaknesses, progress reports, attending annual meetings, etc. How much supervision, (particularly direct) is required for you based on your experience?
Questions:

- Contact: Janet Deppe, State liaison for South Dakota at jdeppe@asha.org or by phone at 301-296-5668
- ASHA Associates Program: associates@asha.org