



# **SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS**

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

Speech-language pathologists, sometimes called *speech therapists*, assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent speech, language, cognitive-communication, voice, swallowing, fluency, and other related disorders. Speech-language pathologists work with people who cannot produce speech sounds, or cannot produce them clearly; those with speech rhythm and fluency problems, such as stuttering; people with voice disorders, such as inappropriate pitch or harsh voice; those with problems understanding and producing language; those who wish to improve their communication skills by modifying an accent; and those with cognitive communication impairments, such as attention, memory, and problem solving disorders. They also work with people who have swallowing difficulties.

## **EXPERIENCE & SKILLS**

Speech therapist and audiologists must enjoy working with others, be sensitive, compassionate, and patient. Essential skills needed are:

- Assessing/Analyzing
- Ability to communicate well
- Patience/Compassion
- Detail-oriented
- Objectivity
- Evaluation

## **EDUCATION & TRAINING**

In 2005, 47 States required speech-language pathologists to be licensed if they worked in a health care setting, and all States required a master's degree or equivalent. A passing score on the national examination on speech-language pathology, offered through the Praxis Series of the Educational Testing Service, is needed as well. Other requirements typically are 300 to 375 hours of supervised clinical experience and 9 months of postgraduate professional clinical experience. Forty-one States have continuing education requirements for licensure renewal.

## **SALARIES**

Salaries vary depending on work setting, years of experience, specialty and region or state.

	<u>Speech Therapist</u>
Entry level	\$42,000
Average	\$52,410
Average in public schools	\$50,000
Experienced	\$65,750

## **EMPLOYMENT & ADVANCEMENT PROSPECTS**

Employment prospects are good. Speech therapy and audiology job opportunities are expected to grow by 51% through 2006. Advancement is good and can occur when promoted to supervisor, by relocating to a larger more prestigious facility or going into private practice.

## **RELATED OCCUPATIONS**

- Physical therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Psychologists
- Recreational therapists
- Rehabilitation counselors
- Audiologists

## **REFERENCES**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association at <http://www.asha.org>

Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov) 2005-06