

## What's News in Speech!

### Celebrate Better Speech and Hearing Month

By

Robyn Merkel-Piccini, M.A., CCC-SLP

*The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association designates May as "Better Speech and Hearing Month!" This is the time of year for Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Audiologists to get together for workshops and conferences. It is also the time of the year to make the field of Speech-Language Pathology known to the community.*



**The purpose of this newsletter is to answer the question:  
"What is a Speech-Language Pathologist?"**

#### SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

##### History:

The need for a professional to deal with disorders of speech was identified in the 1920's; however, "speech correctionists" were not introduced to the schools until the 1950's. In the beginning, speech correctionists dealt with articulation, but over the years, the field has grown to include voice, fluency, language, dysphagia (difficulty swallowing), accent reduction, acquisition, and oral-motor evaluations and therapies. SLPs deal with people of all ages in schools, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, and private practice.

##### Education and Certification:

**There are four professional terms associated with speech therapy:**

1. "Speech Correctionist"
2. "Speech Therapist"
3. "Speech-Language Pathologist" or "Speech Pathologist"
4. "Speech-Language Specialist"



These four terms are often used interchangeably, but can mean different things. In the 1950's, a person would receive a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Correction. This certificate was given until the mid-eighties when the requirements for the teaching certificate changed.

Today, in order to work in most schools, an SLP must obtain a "Speech-Language Specialist" or "Speech-Language Pathologist" certificate which requires a master's degree and approximately 300 clinical hours in diagnostics and interventions.

The masters program for Speech-Language Pathology is unique in that it combines science, education, medicine, and psychology. Most graduate programs require 40-60 graduate credits, in addition to several clinical internships.

SLPs may also be registered to obtain two additional certificates: The Certificate of Clinical Competence and a state license (CCC). The CCCs are issued when the SLP completes a masters degree, 375 hours of supervised clinical hours in communication disorders and therapy, a passing score on the ASHA exam, and completion of a Clinical Fellowship Year. State license requirements vary. SLPs are usually praxis referred to as "Speech-Language Pathologists" or "Speech Therapists."

### **Job Duties:**

An SLP can take on many roles. SLPs can study a specialized area or continue their education to the doctoral level. Here is a general overview of the roles an SLP can serve:

#### **School-Based Program**

- Articulation therapy
- Voice therapy
- Stuttering therapy
- Language therapy
- Child Study Team Member
- Group language lessons
- Sign language programs
- Speech reading programs
- Speech/language evaluations
- Hearing screenings

#### **Rehabilitative Program**

- Dysphagia therapy
- Videofluoroscopy studies
- Laryngectomy patients
- Closed head injury
- Stroke and trauma
- Alzheimer's patients
- Cleft palate
- Speech/language testing
- Hearing screenings