

# Handy Handouts®

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## Managing Your Caseload Without it Managing You

by Lindsey Wegner, M.A., CCC-SLP

Most Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) who work in the schools agree that one of the most difficult aspects of the job is managing a caseload. While the average caseload, or number of students served by an SLP is in the 40s, it can range widely depending on the school district. Some states have placed restrictions on the maximum number of students per caseload, while other states leave it up to local districts to decide.



### Some factors that increase caseloads and time demands:

- Changes in student population as students are identified with more complex diagnoses that require more intensive therapy.
- More time required for collaboration with teachers and parents; especially when a student receives services from a variety of specialists.
- Standards that require SLPs to provide services in the least restrictive environment impacting the number of children which can be seen in a group setting.
- Meetings such as Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, staff meetings, parent conferences, etc. that are required for a school SLP to attend.
- Increased paperwork involved in developing IEPs, progress monitoring, accountability reporting, staffing, etc.

With increased caseloads and time demands many SLPs are addressing their caseloads using a workload approach. **It is important to consider these areas when using a workload approach to demonstrate what is expected of SLPs within the schools:**



- List all current roles and responsibilities that are performed throughout the school year.
- List all students receiving services and exactly what services they receive (time, place, special education eligibility).
- Decide whether the caseload is balanced based on therapy time vs administrative time.
- Meet with other school staff to explain how the workload approach works based on a SLPs requirements to help students succeed with their goals as listed on their IEP.

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Once you determine your workload, there are a number of models that will help you manage it effectively and efficiently.

- **3:1 Model** – students receive direct (actual contact with the student) speech and language services for 3 weeks, and indirect (contact with others involved in the student’s IEP services) for one week.
- **Cyclical Schedule or Block Schedule** – similar to the 3:1 model; however, students receive direct services for a certain period of time, followed by an equal amount time for indirect services.
- **Flex Schedule** – frequency, amount, and types of services vary based on several factors including the student’s progress and classroom demands.
- **Receding Schedule** – intense therapy is implemented at the beginning of services and then recedes or decreases based on increased performance on IEP goals.
- **Weekly Schedule** – services are provided for the same amount of time each week, the typical caseload approach.



It is important to be flexible and remember each student is different and may require their own service model based on their needs. However, different models may help you manage increased caseloads and time demands.



Related Handy Handouts®:

[127 – Collaboration: A Solution for Speech-Language Pathologists](#)

[506 – Speech and Language Therapy Approaches within a School Setting](#)

References

ASHA.ORG <http://www.asha.org/PRPSpecificTopic.aspx?folderid=8589934681&section=Overview>

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