

Speech Language Pathology and Audiology



Nature of the Profession

Speech-language pathologists assess and treat patients with speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders. Audiologists assess and treat those with hearing and related disorders. Speech-language pathologists work with people who cannot make speech sounds, or cannot make them clearly; those with speech rhythm and fluency problems, such as stuttering; people with speech quality problems, such as inappropriate pitch or harsh voice; and those with problems understanding and producing language. They may also work with people who have oral motor problems that cause eating and swallowing difficulties. Audiologists work with people who have hearing and related problems. They use audiometers and other testing devices to measure the loudness at which a person begins to hear sounds, the ability to distinguish between sounds, and other tests of the nature and extent of their hearing loss. Most speech-language pathologists and audiologists provide direct clinical services to individuals with communication disorders. In speech, language and hearing clinics, they may independently develop and carry out a treatment program. In medical facilities, they may work with physicians, social workers, psychologists, and other therapists to develop and execute a treatment plan.

Aptitudes

- Ability to learn the principles and practices of audiology and speech pathology
- Good verbal skills to read scientific literature, evaluate physical problems, and communicate with people
- Ability to keep accurate records, direct projects, and make decisions based on data and observations
- Ability to hear well and speak clearly
- Patience and an interest in helping people
- Good space and form perception and manual dexterity

Education

The minimum educational requirement is a four-year bachelor's degree in audiology or speech pathology or in teacher education with courses in speech and hearing therapy. Most employers in private practice require a master's degree.

Certification

An applicant for a license to practice audiology and speech-language pathology must have a master's degree in audiology or speech-language pathology from an approved program, complete a clinical fellowship year, and pass the licensure or obtain an endorsement by a nationwide professional accrediting organization.

Annual Mean Wage

\$87,170

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