

Speech-Language Pathology Paraprofessionals

This document was created to answer frequently asked questions (FAQ) about Speech-Language Pathology Paraprofessionals (SLPPs). Topics addressed include but are not limited to are SLPP certification, SLPP qualifications, SLPP supervision, and SLP-LA qualifications.

1. What is a speech-language pathology paraprofessional?

A speech-language pathology paraprofessional (SLPP) is defined as an individual who meets the qualifications established through the ND administrative rules process. The minimum requirements for the SLPP are an associate degree that includes the curriculum components listed below. These qualifications are less than those established as necessary for licensure as a speech-language pathologist (SLP), thus the SLPP does not act independently. The SLPP must work under the direction and supervision of the licensed SLP.

2. What are the qualifications to receive a Certificate of Completion to become a speech-language pathology paraprofessional?

As stated in the administrative rule, the SLPP must *have completed an associate's or bachelor's degree that incorporates:*

- a. *Thirty hours of general college education including oral and written communication skills, mathematics, psychology and the biological and health sciences;*
- b. *Thirty hours of college education in the area of speech-language pathology including classes in anatomy, physiology of speech, language, swallowing and hearing mechanisms, communication development, introduction of clinical processes, and fundamentals of human behavior management; and*
- c. *A minimum of one hundred clock hours of fieldwork experience which is supervised by a qualified speech-language pathologist.*

3. How does someone apply for a Certificate of Completion in speech-language pathology paraprofessional?

A candidate for the Certificate of Completion in speech-language pathology paraprofessional must complete an application provided through the Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education. In addition to the application, the candidate must provide transcripts of coursework that includes documentation of fieldwork experience.

4. What is the difference between a speech-language pathology paraprofessional (SLPP) and a speech-language pathology -language assistant (SLP-LA)?

An SLPP receives a certificate from NDDPI and a SLP-LA receives a license from the North Dakota Board of Examiners Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology and have different qualifications. The SLP-LA requires a four (4) year Communications Disorders Bachelor's degree while the SLPP requires a two year degree.

5. If I have a SLP-LA license, do I need to get a SLPP to work in the school setting?

Yes. The NDDPI requires all SLPPs working in the school setting to have a SLPP certificate.

6. I have a SLPP certificate, what setting am I qualified to work in?
SLPPs can only practice within the school setting. In order to work in any other setting, a SLP-LA is required.
7. What age group can the speech-language pathologist paraprofessional work with?
The SLPP can provide services *in a school setting from early childhood through grade twelve*. This may include students ages three through twenty-one. In North Dakota, students may attend public school if he/she has not reached the age of twenty-one before August first of the year of enrollment.
8. Who can supervise a speech-language pathology paraprofessional?
The supervising speech language pathologist must *hold a current restricted educator's professional license for speech-language pathology at the master's degree level as issued by the North Dakota education standards and practices board or holds a current speech-language pathology license issued by the North Dakota state board of examiners in audiology and speech-language pathology*.
9. How many years of experience must the supervising speech-language pathologist have?
The supervising speech-language pathologist must have a *minimum of one year of full-time experience providing speech-language services since receiving their license*.
10. Does the supervising speech-language pathologist need to have coursework in supervision?
The current administrative rules do not address the amount of supervision coursework required for the supervising speech-language pathologist. It is recommended that the supervising speech-language pathologist have completed at least 10 clock hours (coursework, conference, workshop) pertaining to the supervision of support personnel in speech-language pathology.
11. How many speech-language pathology paraprofessionals can the licensed speech-language pathologist supervise?
The licensed speech-language pathologist may *supervise no more than two paraprofessionals* at one time. As the supervisory responsibilities of the supervising speech-language pathologist increase, the responsibilities of the supervisor must decrease.
12. Should the name and services being provided by the speech-language pathology paraprofessional be documented on the IEP?
Yes, the SLP Paraprofessional must not represent himself or herself as a speech-language pathologist. The parent/student must be informed that the services are being provided by the SLP Paraprofessional. The name and the services being provided by the SLP Paraprofessional must be documented on the IEP as well as the speech-language pathology supervisor.
13. What can a speech-language pathology paraprofessional do?
Speech-language pathology paraprofessionals may only provide speech-language pathology paraprofessional services under the direct control of a supervising speech-language pathologist.
A speech-language pathology paraprofessional may:
 - a. *Provide speech-language screenings, without interpretation, following specified screening protocols developed by the supervising speech-language pathologist;*
 - b. *Perform documented tasks developed by the supervising speech-language pathologist;*

- c. Document student's progress toward meeting objectives and report this information to the supervising speech-language pathologist; and*
- d. Prepare materials, perform scheduling and maintain space or equipment.*

14. What duties are speech-language paraprofessionals prohibited from doing?

A speech-language pathology paraprofessional may not:

- a. Make independent decisions regarding changes on the student's individual program;*
- b. Perform standardized or non-standardized diagnostic tests, formal or informal evaluations or interpret test results;*
- c. Take referrals or dismiss students from a caseload;*
- d. Participate in conferences, or other multidisciplinary team meetings without the presence of the supervising speech-language pathologist;*
- e. Disclose confidential information either orally or in writing to anyone not designated by the supervising speech-language pathologist;*
- f. Provide counseling to the student or family regarding a communication disorder;*
- g. Prepare or sign any formal documentation including an individualized education program or an assessment plan as a supervising speech language pathologist; or*
- h. Maintain their own caseload.*

15. What is considered direct supervision?

Direct supervision means on-site, in-view observation and guidance by an SLP while an assigned activity is performed by support personnel. Direct supervision performed by the supervising SLP may include, but is not limited to, the following: observation of a portion of the screening or treatment procedures performed by the SLPP, coaching the SLPP, and modeling for the SLPP. The SLP can view and communicate with the student and SLPA live via real time telecommunication technology to supervise the SLPP, giving the SLP the opportunity to provide immediate feedback.

16. What is considered indirect supervision?

Indirect supervision is the supervising SLP is not at the same facility or in close proximity to the SLPP but is available to provide supervision by electronic means. Indirect supervision activities performed by the supervising SLP may include, but are not limited to, demonstration, record review, review and evaluation of audio or videotaped sessions, and interactive television and supervisory conferences that may be conducted by telephone, e-mail, or live webcam."

17. What is the recommended amount of supervision for the speech-language pathology paraprofessional?

The supervision requirements recommended are minimum requirements for each SLPP supervised. At times, it may be appropriate to provide more supervision in order to assure that quality services are being provided; this will depend on the skills and experience of the SLPP, the needs of the student(s), the task assigned, and other factors. Training and supervisory time must be provided whenever the SLPP begins services with a new student(s) at any time throughout the school year.

Recommended Initial Supervision Period – 90 Days

At least 20% direct and 10% indirect supervision is recommended for the first 90 days. (For a typical 32- hour school workweek, this would be 10 hours for both direct and indirect supervision.) Supervision days and time of day (morning/afternoon) should be alternated to ensure that all students receive direct contact with the supervising SLP at least once every 2 weeks.

Direct supervision of the student's services should be not less than 20% of the actual student contact time per week. This supervision is recommended for each SLPP. This ensures that the supervisor will have direct contact time with the SLPP as well as the student. During each week, the supervisor should review data on every student seen by the SLPP. In addition, the direct supervision should be scheduled so that all students seen by the SLPP are directly supervised in a timely manner. Direct supervision should provide information about the quality of the SLPP's performance of assigned tasks and should verify that activities are limited to tasks specified in the assistant's scope of responsibilities.

Indirect supervision is recommended not less than 10% of the actual student's contact time and may include demonstration, record review, review and evaluation of audio or videotaped sessions, interactive television, and/or supervisory conferences that may be conducted by telephone.

Changes in direct and indirect supervision, below or beyond the minimum of 30% recommended the first 90 workdays, will depend on the skills of the SLPP and the needs of the student. This must be decided on a case-by-case basis by the supervising SLP.

Whenever the SLPP's performance is judged by the supervising SLP to be unsatisfactory, the SLPP should be retrained in the necessary skills and direct observation should be increased to 50% of all sessions until the SLPP performance is judged to be satisfactory over two consecutive observations.

Minimum Supervision Requirements

After the initial 90-day work period, the amount of supervision may be adjusted depending on the assigned tasks. The supervision of each SLPP should include at least 10% direct supervision and 10% indirect supervision on a regularly scheduled basis. For a 40-hour workweek, a total of 8 hours of supervision should be provided for each SLPP with a minimum of 4 hours of direct supervision. Supervision days and time of day (morning/afternoon) should be alternated to ensure that all students receive direct contact with the supervising SLP at least once every 2 weeks.

The supervising SLP should be available for consultation via personal contact, pager, phone, or other immediate means 100% of the time, although not necessarily onsite. If for any reason the supervising SLP is no longer available to provide the level of supervision stipulated, the SLPP should not perform tasks until a new supervisor has been designated. In the planning process, provision must be made for emergency situations such as an extended illness of the supervising SLP.