

Speech-Language Pathologists**

Speech-language pathologists (SLP), sometimes called *speech therapists*, assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent disorders related to speech, language, cognitive-communication, voice, swallowing, and fluency.

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; and those with cognitive communication impairments, such as attention, memory, and problem solving disorders. They also work with people who have swallowing difficulties.

Work environment: Although the work is not physically demanding, it requires attention to detail and intense concentration. The emotional needs of clients and their families may be demanding. Most full-time speech-language pathologists work 40 hours per week. About 20 percent of speech-language pathologists worked part-time in 2008. Those who work on a contract basis may spend a substantial amount of time traveling between facilities.

Education and certification: In the State of California to be qualified to work in the schools you must possess:

1. A master's degree in Communicative Disorders or Speech-language Pathology.
2. A passing score on the national examination on speech-language pathology, offered through the [Praxis](#) Series of the Educational Testing Service.
3. 400 hours of supervised clinical experience and 9 months of postgraduate professional clinical experience (CFY) to earn the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP) offered by the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#).
4. California State License approved by the [Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Board](#). This will include either thirty-six (36) weeks of full-time supervised experience or seventy-two (72) weeks of part-time supervised experience which is called the RPE (required professional experience). Students complete the CFY and the RPE in the same 9 month experience.

5. The SLPS credential, which is satisfied by earning your Master's degree and completing the 400 clinical practicum hours earned in three different settings. Students must complete three additional courses in psychology: Developmental Psychology, Educational Psychology and Exceptional Child. It is recommended these be completed as an undergraduate.

Earnings. Median annual wages for speech-language pathologists in California were \$62,930 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent earned between \$50,330 and \$79,620. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$41,240, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$99,220. Median annual wages in the industries employing the largest numbers of speech-language pathologists were:

Nursing care facilities	\$79,120
Home health care services	77,030
General medical and surgical hospitals	68,430
Offices of other health practitioners	67,910
Elementary and secondary schools	58,140

Employment Speech-language pathologists held about 119,300 jobs in 2008. About 48 percent were employed in educational services. Others were employed in hospitals; offices of other health practitioners, and long-term care facilities.

Nine percent of speech-language pathologists were self-employed in 2008. They contract to provide services in schools, offices of physicians, hospitals, or nursing care facilities, or work as consultants to industry.

Employment change. Employment of speech-language pathologists is expected to grow by 19 percent from 2008 to 2018, faster than the average for all occupations.

Job prospects. In addition to job growth, a number of job openings in speech-language pathology will be due to retirements. Opportunities should be favorable, particularly for those with the ability to speak a second language, such as Spanish.

****Information from the US Department of Labor**

Bureau of labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos099.htm#outlook>