

## 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.

**Earnings:** Median annual wages for speech-language pathologists in California were \$69,870 in 2012. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$44,380, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$107,650.

**Employment:** Speech-language pathologists held 134,100 jobs in 2012. Most speech-language pathologists were employed in educational services. Others were employed in hospitals, offices of other health practitioners, and long-term care facilities.

**Employment growth:** Employment of speech-language pathologists is expected to grow by 19 percent from 2012 to 2022, 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/ooh/healthcare/speech-language-pathologists.htm>