

# HELPING YOUR STUDENTS MASTER DIRECTION-FOLLOWING SKILLS

0.1 ASHA CEU and 1 Act 48 PDH

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LARCY HAS NO RELEVANT RELATIONSHIPS TO DISCLOSE.

MAGNUSON HAS NO RELEVANT RELATIONSHIPS TO DISCLOSE.

## **Learning Objectives:**

- Describe at least three underlying linguistic or cognitive components (e.g., vocabulary, phonological memory, syntax/morphology) that contribute to successful direction-following skills
- Develop measurable, functional goals for students targeting skills necessary for following directions successfully
- Implement at least three therapeutic activities targeting direction-following skills



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Following directions is a foundational skill that supports students' participation, independence, and academic success across school settings - yet many learners struggle with the complex linguistic and cognitive demands involved. This session will provide SLPs with a comprehensive framework for understanding, assessing, and supporting the components that underlie successful direction following. Participants will explore how key vocabulary development, phonological memory, syntactic and morphological comprehension, and the integration of these elements work together to support students' ability to process and act on verbal instructions. The presentation will outline how to identify breakdowns within each skill area through efficient, targeted assessment practices. Attendees will also learn how to write clear, functional SMART goals that align with students' current needs and incorporate appropriate scaffolding to promote meaningful growth during therapy sessions. Practical, therapy-ready examples will be woven throughout the session, illustrating activities and interventions appropriate for a wide range of learners, from those developing basic concept knowledge to students working on multi-step, embedded, or complex linguistic directions. SLPs will leave with a deeper understanding of the linguistic underpinnings of direction-following skills and a toolkit of actionable strategies to immediately apply in their practice.

**Speaker's Bio:** Emily R. Laracy, M.A., M.S., CCC-SLP is a school-based speech-language pathologist and adjunct professor who works with elementary school students in regular education, learning support, emotional support, partial hospitalization, autistic support, homebound, and teletherapy settings. She is also an adjunct professor and guest lecturer at two universities. She has taken part in research projects in project design, data collection, data analysis, writing and publication, and training and supervision roles. Her current research interests include the effects of psychological factors, such as anxiety, on children's speech and language skills, and the efficacy of co-teaching programs in school settings. She is the author of "Treating Selective Mutism as a Speech-Language Pathologist" and serves as the secretary and speech pathologist representative on the Selective Mutism Association Board of Directors.

LuAnn Magnuson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is a full professor at East Stroudsburg University in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. She completed her Ph.D. at Rutgers University (UMDNJ). She has over 30 years of clinical experience in various settings. She worked for 27 years in the elementary school setting. Her research interests include service learning, test validity, language and reading, and the impact of rheumatic and inflammatory disease on cognitive-linguistic function.