Speech-Language Pathologists—who are we, and what do we do?

A Presentation for Administrators, Teachers, and Other School Personnel
What’s up with that title? CCC-SLP

• SLP = speech-language pathologist
• CCC = Certificate of Clinical Competence
  ◆ Earning a master’s or doctorate degree from an accredited university
  ◆ Passing a national exam
  ◆ Completing a 1-year, supervised clinical fellowship.
• Many states require SLPs to have state licenses to practice.
• An SLP must complete a certain number of continuing education units (CEUs) each year to maintain the CCC.
What is a communication disorder?

• An impairment in the ability to receive, send, process, and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal, and graphic symbol systems.

• It may affect one’s ability to speak, read, write, process information, interact socially, and so forth.
What do SLPs do?

Provide services for:

- Speech production
- Language
- Cognition
- Feeding and swallowing
- Fluency
- Voice
- Resonance
- Auditory habilitation/rehabilitation
What is a *speech disorder*?

- An impairment of articulation of speech sounds, fluency, or voice
What is a *speech sound/articulation disorder*?

An atypical production of speech sounds characterized by

- **Substitutions** (*tool/cool, wash/watch*)
- **Omissions** (*sip/slip, boo/book*)
- **Additions or distortions** (*lisps, wabbit/rabbit*)

This disorder may interfere with intelligibility.

Significant speech sound disorders impact a child’s self-esteem, peer relationships, and ability to read, spell, and write accurately.
What is a language disorder?

• A *language disorder* is impaired comprehension and/or use of spoken, written, and/or other symbol systems.

• The disorder may involve, in any combination,
  - the **form** of language (phonology, morphology, syntax);
  - the **content** of language (semantics); and/or
  - the **function** of language in communication (pragmatics).
What are the different types of language disorders?

• Phonology
• Morphology
• Syntax
• Semantics
• Pragmatics/Social Language
What are cognitive disorders?

Cognitive disorders refers to difficulties with:

- attention;
- memory;
- problem solving; and/or
- executive functioning.

These symptoms may be the result of a traumatic brain injury (TBI) due to concussions and other head injuries.
What are *feeding and swallowing disorders*?

- A *feeding disorder* includes difficulty getting food to the mouth, food selectivity, refusal, and/or difficulty with food textures or colors.
- A *swallowing disorder* is difficulty managing foods/liquids once they are in the mouth.
- Risks include malnutrition, dehydration, choking, and aspiration pneumonia.
- This disorder is educationally relevant because children must be kept safe when eating and drinking in school.
What is a fluency disorder?

• An interruption in the flow of speaking characterized by atypical rate, rhythm, and repetitions in sounds, syllables, words, and phrases.

• Prolonging, repeating, or blocking on sounds or words are typical signs of stuttering.
What is a *voice disorder*?

- Abnormal production and/or absences of vocal quality, pitch, loudness, resonance, and/or duration, which is inappropriate for an individual’s age and/or sex gender.
- Voice may sound hoarse, raspy, too soft, high pitched, or choppy.
What are *resonance disorders*?

Difficulties with:
- Hypernasality
- Hyponasality
- Cul-de-sac resonance
- Forward focus
What is auditory habilitation/rehabilitation?

• Speech, language, communication, and listening skills that are affected by hearing loss, deafness

• Types of auditory processing disorders are not related to hearing loss
What is Telepractice?

*Telepractice* is the application of telecommunications technology to the delivery of speech-language pathology and audiology professional services at a distance by linking clinician to student/client/patient for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation.
Where do SLPs provide services?

- Classrooms
- Lunchrooms, playgrounds, media centers
- Communities
- Job training sites
- Homes
- Preschools
- Therapy rooms
- Clinical settings/private practices/hospitals
What do SLPS do?

• Conduct screenings and diagnostic evaluations
• Work with children who have a wide range of mild to severe disabilities
• Provide services on an individual, small-group, or classroom basis to infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, and adolescents
• Work on listening, speaking, reading, writing, and learning strategies in general education and special education settings
What others things do SLPs do?

- Analyze what may be contributing to students' difficulty mastering various aspects of the curriculum and state standards
- Work within the context of MTSS/RTI to provide materials, strategies, data collection and analysis, and short-term interventions
- Provide training on communication-related topics
What more do SLPs do?

- Develop individualized family service plans (IFSPs) and individualized education programs (IEPs)
- Complete documentation as required by federal, state, and local agencies
- Provide counseling and education to families
- Serve as consultants to other educators and related professionals
- Supervise support personnel in public schools
- Supervise clinical practica and clinical fellowships
What do SLPs do to support literacy?

- Teach language underpinnings of literacy, including:
  - Vocabulary
  - Grammar
  - Phonology
  - Idiomatic concepts
  - Sequencing
  - Categorizing
  - Summarizing
  - Social language skills
How do SLPs assist teachers?

- Coaching teachers to facilitate improved communication
- Developing modifications and accommodations
- Setting expectations for students
- Establishing reinforcement and motivation strategies
- Collecting and analyzing student data
- Providing resources to supplement instruction
How do SLPs support college and career readiness?

- SLPs support college and career readiness in these ways:
  - SLPs are great partners and useful resources who can serve on a variety of teams (concussion management, professional learning community, curriculum teams, etc.).
  - SLPs are teaching speech and language skills that are foundational to literacy, behavioral, and academic success for students with IEPs and for at-risk students (e.g., MTSS).
  - SLPs can provide staff training on many topics.
Why should teachers consider making the SLP their new best friend?

- There is emerging evidence that collaborating to provide speech and language services within the classroom shows greater improvement in academic and social functioning.
- All students may benefit from the SLP’s work in the classroom.
- Students with behavioral problems often have an underlying language weakness or disorder.
- A causal element of literacy problems may be weak or disordered language skills.
We are better together!

SLPs look forward to partnering with you to improve student outcomes and contribute to students’ college and career readiness!
Questions/Comments/Invitations