



Speech-Language Pathology Services

Who are Speech-Language Pathologists?

- Speech–Language Pathologists (S-LPs) have a Master’s degree in Communication Disorders. They are employed by school boards to provide speech, language, and communication development services to school-age students.
- S-LPs specialize in the assessment and intervention of articulation (speech) and language learning disorders as well as other communication difficulties (e.g. stuttering, social communication...).
- S-LPs work with assigned schools on an itinerant basis.

The Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist

- S-LPs provide direct or indirect speech-language services to students. They collaborate with teachers and parents/guardians to develop and/or implement speech and language programming.

Types of Speech-Language Disorders

- **Articulation/Phonology:** difficulty pronouncing certain speech sounds (e.g. ‘tar’ for ‘car’).
- **Language:** difficulty understanding and/or using oral or written language (e.g. difficulty following directions, understanding meaning, using age-appropriate sentence grammar, using oral or written language to show what you know).
- **Pragmatics/Social Skills:** difficulty understanding and using social language at an age appropriate level; difficulty with social interactions and conversation skills (e.g. turn taking, getting along with others, topic maintenance...).
- **Voice:** unusual high/low pitch for the student’s age, monotone voice, consistently hoarse, or nasal/denasal voice quality.
- **Fluency (Stuttering):** difficulty controlling the fluency and rate of speech (e.g. consistently repeating sounds and/or parts of words).
- **Phonological Awareness/Literacy:** difficulty with decoding (sounding out) words, rhyming, sound-letter correspondence, segmenting, blending, and spelling.
- **Hearing:** difficulty producing sounds, using and/or understanding language due to hearing related concerns (e.g. hearing loss, cochlear implant...). S-LPs are able to perform hearing screenings.

Services for Students with Complex Communication Needs

- All S-LPs are part of the program planning teams of students from P – 12 with complex communication needs (e.g. Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome...). The S-LP’s involvement might include: working directly with the student, consulting regarding program planning for the student, assessing, monitoring, and evaluating program goals for the student.

Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC)

- Some students who are non-verbal or have limited speech may use another mode than speech to communicate (e.g. iPod Touch/iPad with AAC apps, PECS - Picture Exchange Communication System, PODD – Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display, voice output device, sign language...).

Responsibilities of the Speech-Language Pathologist

- S-LPs work collaboratively with Student Services Team, school principals, and teachers in developing appropriate programming for students with communication difficulties.
- S-LPs assess the individual student's speech, language and communication needs.
- S-LPs consult and collaborate with Program Planning Teams (including parents/guardians) to develop Individual Program Plans (IPPs), Documented Adaptations (DAs), and Transition Plans.
- S-LPs may provide direct or indirect service to students with speech and/or language needs.
- S-LPs consult with Resource, Learning Centre and classroom teachers. Programming suggestions/materials may be provided to parents, teachers, and school staff.
- S-LPs collaborate with literacy teams by sharing resources with teachers. S-LPs may provide literacy and language based classroom programs such as the KLLIC program in Grade Primary (KLLIC = Kindergarten Language and Literacy in the Classroom).

Program Overview

- The emphasis for speech-language services is on early intervention. S-LPs may provide direct or indirect service depending on the student's communication and learning needs.
- The selection of students for direct therapy is dependent on a number of variables including the type and severity of the student's communication needs and the availability of support at home and at school for the student.
- Consultation (indirect) service may take a variety of forms: participation on Individual Program Planning (IPP) Teams, team teaching, providing home programs, providing training and professional development to teachers and teacher assistants, and collaboration with outside agencies.

Referral Process

- Students may be referred for speech-language services by teachers, parents, or outside agencies through their school based Program Planning team. They may be identified prior to school entry through preschool S-LP services from Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres.
- Referrals are received through the school based team at the student's school.
- For all ages parent consent is required prior to service.

Contact Information

- To contact an SSRCE Speech-Language Pathologist please contact the student's school.