

## Speech-Language Pathologist

Speech-Language Pathologists (sometimes called *Speech Therapists*) assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent communication and swallowing disorders in children and adults. Speech, language, and swallowing disorders result from a variety of causes, such as a stroke, brain injury, hearing loss, developmental delay, Parkinson's disease, a cleft palate, or autism.

*Speech-Language Pathologists typically do the following:*

- Evaluate levels of speech, language, or swallowing difficulty
- Identify treatment options
- Create and carry out an individualized treatment plan that addresses specific functional needs
- Teach children and adults how to make sounds and improve their voices and maintain fluency
- Help individuals improve vocabulary and sentence structure used in oral and written language
- Work with children and adults to develop and strengthen the muscles used to swallow
- Counsel individuals and families on how to cope with communication and swallowing disorders

Speech-Language Pathologists work with children and adults who have problems with speech and language, including related cognitive or social communication problems. They may be unable to speak at all, or they may speak with difficulty or have rhythm and fluency problems, such as stuttering. Speech-Language Pathologists may work with people who are unable to understand language or with those who have voice disorders, such as inappropriate pitch or a harsh voice.

Speech-Language Pathologists also must complete administrative tasks, including keeping accurate records and documenting billing information. They record their initial evaluations and diagnoses, track treatment progress, and note any changes in an individual's condition or treatment plan.

Some Speech-Language Pathologists specialize in working with specific age groups, such as children or the elderly. Others focus on treatment programs for specific communication or swallowing problems, such as those resulting from strokes, trauma, or a cleft palate.

### **Work Environment**

Some Speech-Language Pathologists work in schools and most others work in healthcare facilities, such as hospitals. Most speech-language pathologists work full time.

*Watch a video about being a Speech-Language Pathologist*

### **Top Local Employers:**

Soliant Health, Procure Therapy, Sunbelt Staffing, TherapyTravelers, Stepping Stones Group



**Median Pay**

\$101,830

**Job Growth (2020-2025)**

14%

**Education and Training**

Speech-Language Pathologists typically need at least a master's degree. Graduate programs often include courses in speech and language development, age-specific speech disorders, alternative communication methods, and swallowing disorders. These programs also include supervised clinical experience. Most states require that speech-language pathologists be licensed. Requirements vary by state.

**Local Education:**

[San Jose State University](#)

[San Francisco State University](#)

**For More Information:**

[American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#)

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

