



STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE AND HEARING
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Let's Talk about...Speech-Language Pathology

A Consumer Guide to Understanding the Profession in Pennsylvania

Many people take the ability to communicate for granted.

Communication skills are building blocks for forming and maintaining relationships, and for learning.

Communication problems can lead to isolation, frustration and even depression.

People of any age may have, or acquire, a communication problem, such as

A 3 year old who has not yet started to talk

A teenager who stutters

A businessman who has a hoarse voice or chronic laryngitis

A grandmother who recently has not been making sense when she speaks

A fourth-grader who cannot be understood by his teachers

A retiree who, since his stroke, has problems finding the words he wants to say

A Speech-Language Pathologist may be able to help!

What is a speech-language pathologist?

A speech-language pathologist is a licensed health care professional who screens, identifies, assesses, refers, and provides treatment to persons with – or at risk for – speech, voice, language, communication, swallowing, and related disabilities. Speech-language pathologists have specialized education, training and experience; they have earned either a master's or doctoral degree from an accredited university. All licensed speech-language pathologists in Pennsylvania are required to continue their education and remain current in the profession.

Certain settings are exempt from licensure (individuals employed by public schools, or federal or state agencies).

How do I find a licensed speech-language pathologist?

Speech-language pathologists work in a variety of settings, including private practice, hospitals, university-based clinics, and schools. To locate a speech-language pathologist, you may obtain a referral from your primary care physician, from your health insurer's "network" listing, or from a personal recommendation of friends or family. You can also search your local "yellow pages" or online under "speech and language pathologists" or "speech therapists". Professional associations, such as the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, www.asha.org) as well as the Pennsylvania Speech-Language Hearing Association (PSHA, www.psha.org) also have listings of their members.

What is the State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language and Hearing and how can it help me?

The State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language and Hearing regulates the practice and licensure of persons offering speech-language and hearing services in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Board's purposes are to safeguard the public health, safety and welfare; to protect the public from being misled by incompetent, unscrupulous and unauthorized persons; to assail unprofessional conduct on the part of qualified speech-language pathologists, audiologists and teachers of the hearing impaired; and to insure that the highest possible quality of speech-language and hearing services are provided for all people with communication disabilities in the Commonwealth.

Make sure the **professionals** who serve you are licensed and in good standing. You can check the license of your speech-language pathologist by looking for his/her name on <http://www.licensepa.state.pa.us>.

What do I do if I have a complaint?

If you believe the practice or the service provided by a licensed speech-language pathologist is unethical, immoral, below an acceptable standard of practice or out of the scope of the profession, or if you believe someone is practicing speech-language pathology without a license (except for federal or state employees or school district employees) you are urged to file a Statement of Complaint Form with the Department of State's Professional Compliance Office.

You may request a Statement of Complaint Form by mail, by calling the Professional Compliance Office Hotline at 1-800-822-2113 (if you are calling from within Pennsylvania) or at 1-717-783-4849 (if you are calling from outside Pennsylvania). Or if you prefer, you may use our online Statement of Complaint form, which is available at: www.dos.state.pa.us, then select these menu options: "Professional Licensure" followed by "Complaints;" these options are listed on the left side of the screen.

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