

Differences between Speech Language pathologists (SLPS) and Board Certified Behavior analysts (BCBAs).

Understanding the differences and similarities between SLPs and BCBAs can help treatment teams work together more effectively.



Education

SLPs require a master's degree coursework addresses

- Typical and atypical language development
- Fluency, voice, swallowing,
- Speech sound production,
- Social and cognitive communication
- Professional ethics and fieldwork

BCBAs require certification coursework includes

- Underpinnings of behavior analysis,
- Measurement, data display, and interpretation of behaviors
- Experimental design, assessment of behavior, and intervention procedures
- Professional ethics and fieldwork.



Assessment

SLPs provide

- Differentially diagnose communication, speech sound, and swallowing disorders
- Use variety of tools such as observation, interview, standardized measures, and normative data to determine need
- Use data based decision making to develop intervention plans

BCBAs conduct

- Functional Behavior Assessments in order to determine the function of behavior.
- Assess through observation, checklists, and data analysis to determine behavior change targets
- Use data based decision making to develop intervention plans.



Treatment

SLP Frameworks

- View language development through a social-pragmatic lens child is an active participant in learning language.
- Treatment may draw on a variety of models and includes multiple modalities, such as verbalization, sign, and assistive technology.

BCBA Frameworks

- Focus on changing external stimuli in order to elicit targeted communication functions.
- Many BCBAs emphasize use of verbalization or sign.



Scope of Practice

The American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) includes:

- Counseling, prevention, screening, assessment and treatment of communication, speech sounds, voice, fluency, cognitive, AAC, and swallowing disorders across the lifespan.

The Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) identifies:

- Behavior analytics within diverse specializations ranging from autism, brain injury treatment, and organizational management, among others.