

Speech-Language Pathologist

You help people talk, be understood and swallow safely, from toddlers to stroke patients. A master's degree is the price of entry.

TYPICAL PAY

\$97,870

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$63k to \$134k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Public schools, hospitals, rehabilitation clinics, nursing hom...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Biology, psychology and English. Volunteer somewhere with children or older adults so you know what you are signing up for.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Usually in communication sciences and disorders. If you major in something else you can still get in, but you will owe a year of prerequisite courses first.
- 3 Master's degree from an accredited program** 2 years
Two years, with about 400 supervised clinical hours built in. It must be accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology or you cannot be certified.
- 4 Pass the national exam** Final year
The Praxis test in speech-language pathology, taken near the end of the master's degree.
- 5 Clinical fellowship, then license** 9 to 12 months
About nine months of paid, supervised full time work. Finish it and you can hold the CCC-SLP (Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology) and your state license.

Pros and cons

- + Median pay near \$98,000 with strong projected growth
- + You can work with children, adults or both, in schools or hospitals
- + Part time and flexible schedules are genuinely available
- Six or seven years of school and often significant debt
- Master's admission is competitive and rejection is common
- School caseloads can be far larger than the time available

Good to know

A lot of the job is swallowing, not speech

In hospitals and nursing homes, deciding whether someone can safely swallow food after a stroke is a huge part of the work. Get it wrong and food goes into the lungs and causes pneumonia. Most teenagers...

The accreditor is the gatekeeper

Only master's programs accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology lead to national certification. A degree from an unaccredited program will no...

Optional boosts

Swallowing and feeding. Bilingual practice. Augmentative and alternative communication. Early intervention.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Speech-Language Pathologists (29-1127.00)
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: certification
Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology
Praxis tests from Educational Testing Service

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/speech-language-pathologist>



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