

SUPPORTIVE PERSONNEL  
GUIDELINES  
Working with  
Speech-Language Pathologists



**Canadian Association of  
Speech-Language Pathologists  
and Audiologists**

CASLPA  
#1000-1 Nicholas St.  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7  
1-800-259-8519 or 613-567-9968  
Fax: 613-567-2859  
E-Mail: [caslpa@caslpa.ca](mailto:caslpa@caslpa.ca)  
[www.caslpa.ca](http://www.caslpa.ca)

Approved October 2, 2004  
Revised December 10, 2010

# Table of Contents

---

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Scope of Practice for Support Personnel.....</b>	<b>2</b>
A.	Areas to be within the Scope of Practice.....	2
B.	Areas to be outside the scope of practice .....	3
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Core Competencies for Supportive Personnel .....</b>	<b>5</b>
A.	Qualifications .....	5
B.	Basic Core Competencies.....	5
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Training Requirements for Supportive Personnel.....</b>	<b>6</b>
A.	Operational Aspects of Training.....	6
B.	Coursework .....	6
C.	Fieldwork.....	7
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Supervisory Guidelines for Supportive Personnel.....</b>	<b>8</b>
A.	Supervisory Training.....	8
B.	Amount and Type of supervision of the CASLPA Supportive Personnel member.....	9
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Code of Ethics for Supportive Personnel.....</b>	<b>11</b>
A.	Duties and Responsibilities to the Patients and the Public.....	11
B.	Duties and Responsibilities to the Supportive Personnel Profession.....	12
C.	Legal Responsibilities .....	12

# 1.0 Introduction

---

The Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA) has undertaken to develop membership guidelines that would dictate under what conditions and with what requirements and responsibilities Supportive Personnel might join the Association. The consideration of this question dates back to 1995, followed by an 87% majority of members who voted in 1999 endorsing a move by CASLPA to create a new “associate” member category. The vote was followed by a two-year project in four-phases to define the conditions, requirements and responsibilities of this new membership category. An expert panel was formed to lead the process of forming consensus statements that laid out the requirements and responsibilities. These statements were validated by an independent sample of 200 members and the results of the validation synthesized into a final report. The Board of Directors worked through statements that did not reach consensus by the expert panel and produced a final draft report in February of 2004.

CASLPA conducted a questionnaire of all members in Spring/Summer of 2004 requesting feedback on statements included in the final draft report relating to Scope of Practice, Core Competencies, Training Requirements, Supervisory Guidelines, Code of Ethics and Grandfathering. The questionnaires were sent to 3,544 Speech-Language Pathologists. Of these, 678 responded for a response rate of 19%. The Board then reviewed the results of the questionnaire at a meeting on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and accepted most of the statements that received a consensus rating from members of approximately 80%.

The following document represents the work of the Expert Panel, the CASLPA Board of Directors and feedback from Speech-Language Pathology members in Canada.

Note: CASLPA’s Supportive Personnel members must adhere to these guidelines unless provincial/territorial guidelines are in place. Provincial/territorial regulations/legislation always takes precedence.

## **2.0 Scope of Practice for Support Personnel**

---

### **A. Areas to be within the Scope of Practice**

**Supportive Personnel in Speech-Language Pathology may engage in the following activity:**

1. Using defined screening protocols selected by the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist. Screening results will not be interpreted by the Supportive Personnel.
2. Assisting a Speech-Language Pathologist during assessments, including, but not limited to, preparing materials and performing clerical duties as requested by a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
3. Performing hearing screening, without interpretation, under the supervision of a Speech-Language Pathologist.
4. Following and implementing documented treatment plans or protocols developed by a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist for patients/clients in direct and group activities.
5. Providing direct treatment to patients/clients under the supervision of a Speech-Language Pathologist.
6. Preparing materials for use in therapy, home programs and classroom under the guidance of a Speech-Language Pathologist.
7. Documenting patient/client performance during intervention and reporting the information to a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
8. Assisting with informal and formal documentation as directed by the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
9. Participating in family conferences, case conferences, or inter-disciplinary team conferences with the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist present.
10. Assisting a Speech-Language Pathologist with research projects, in-service training, and family or community education approved by the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.

11. Assisting the Speech-Language Pathologist to communicate with patients/clients when there are language differences and the Supportive Personnel is competent in the other language.
12. Assisting with departmental operations: appointment scheduling, chart preparation, data collection, record keeping, and safety procedures, maintenance of supplies and equipment and audio-visual equipment operation.
13. Attending staff meetings when required.
14. Reporting patient/client information to the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist and documenting as directed by the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
15. Teaching courses within a supportive personnel training program with course content related to the scope of practice of supportive personnel and approved by a speech-language pathologist/audiologist involved in the training program.

## **B. Areas to be outside the scope of practice**

### **Supportive Personnel in speech-language pathology may not engage in the following activities:**

1. Representing oneself as a Speech-Language Pathologist.
2. Selecting patients/clients for service.
3. Screening patients/clients for swallowing disorders.
4. Diagnosing patients/clients.
5. Conducting evaluations, interpreting data, developing or altering treatment plans, or explaining assessment results of patients/clients.
6. Performing procedures that pose a significant risk to a client/patient or that require a high level of clinical acumen and technical skill (e.g., vocal tract prosthesis shaping or fitting, vocal tract imaging, and oropharyngeal swallow therapy with bolus material) without appropriate training and supervision.
7. Counselling or consulting with the patient/client, family, or others regarding the patient's/client's status or service.

8. Making referrals for additional assessment or treatment services.
9. Discharging patients/clients from services.
10. Disclosing confidential information either orally or in writing to anyone without appropriate consent unless required by law.
11. Participating in case conferences or inter-disciplinary team conferences without a supervising or another Speech-Language Pathologist present.
12. Demonstrating swallowing strategies or precautions to patients/clients, family, or staff.
13. Having initial contact with patients/clients without the approval or direction of the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
14. Interpreting performance or progress of patients/clients or discussing prognosis.
15. Explaining treatment rationale to patients/clients for whom a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist has created the treatment plan.
16. Writing reports without the knowledge and consent of the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
17. Signing any documents in lieu of a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist(e.g. formal reports and treatment plans)

## **3.0 Core Competencies for Supportive Personnel**

---

### **A. Qualifications**

**Supportive Personnel in Speech-Language Pathology are expected to have the following qualifications:**

1. A minimum of a High School diploma or the equivalent.
2. Completion of a training program (see Training Requirements).
3. Proficiency in the language in which the patient/client is being served, without communication characteristics that could negatively impact service delivery.

### **B. Basic Core Competencies**

**Supportive Personnel in Speech-Language Pathology are expected to be proficient in the following qualifications:**

1. Selecting, preparing, and presenting materials consistent with the program designed by a Speech-Language Pathologist.
2. Demonstrating an understanding of treatment objectives.
3. Identifying environmental factors that may interfere with patient/client treatment.
4. Managing time effectively.
5. Responding effectively to attitudes and behaviours of patients/clients.
6. Relating to and interacting positively with supervisors, colleagues and the population being served.
7. Seeking appropriate advice from a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist when necessary.
8. Being able to work under supervision.

9. Demonstrating appropriate conduct (e.g., respecting/maintaining confidentiality of patients/clients, maintaining personal appearance appropriate for the work setting, evaluating own performance, and recognizing own professional limitations).
10. Keeping accurate records (e.g., documenting treatment plan and protocols accurately and concisely).
11. Using appropriate oral and written language.

## **4.0 Training Requirements for Supportive Personnel**

---

### **A. Operational Aspects of Training**

#### **Supportive Personnel will:**

1. Have completed training from an educational program for Supportive Personnel in speech-language pathology and/or audiology.
2. Satisfy the competencies defined in this document under Training Requirements.

### **B. Coursework**

#### **Potential training requirements for Supportive Personnel shall include:**

1. Introduction to the profession of Supportive Personnel - roles, scope of practice, guidelines, supervision, ethical and regulatory issues.
2. Anatomy & physiology of the speech & hearing mechanisms.
3. Normal speech-language and hearing development.
4. Communication disorders and swallowing: screening and treatment methods
5. Developmental and Behavioural Psychology working in the field of communication disorders.

6. Clinical procedures in communication disorders including observing, preparing materials, report writing, documenting, functioning and maintenance of instrumentation
7. Introduction to the use of instrumentation and technology in communication disorders
8. Amplification systems and aural rehabilitation.

## **C. Fieldwork**

### **Potential training requirements for fieldwork for Supportive Personnel in Speech-Language Pathology should include:**

1. Assisting with screening under the supervision of a Speech-Language Pathologist.
2. Assisting with the clinical management of persons with communicative disorders, including preparing materials for therapy, following treatment plans, documenting performance, and reporting to the supervising therapist.
3. Interacting with patients/clients while implementing a prescribed plan for remediation.
4. Setting up clinical equipment and materials.
5. Record keeping and managing of clinical data.
6. Performing various clerical duties.
7. Students will complete a practicum in an assistive capacity with an SLP at an agency or agencies (approved by their training program), accruing a minimum of 100 hours of fieldwork experience.

## 5.0 Supervisory Guidelines for Supportive Personnel

---

### A. Supervisory Training

1. Supportive Personnel should be supervised by a Speech-Language Pathologist with clinical experience (ideally a minimum of two years). The supervisor must be a CASLPA member or registered/licensed with a provincial/territorial regulatory body.
2. Additional preparation in the form of formal course work, workshop attendance, peer support, mentorship or independent study in the area of supervision is highly recommended for professionals supervising Supportive Personnel.
3. The content of such training/experience should include but is NOT limited to:
  - a. The practice of clinical speech-language pathology including the mandated reporting laws and knowledge of ethical and legal issues.
  - b. Familiarity with best practice supervision literature
  - c. Improving knowledge and understanding of the relationship between a Speech-Language Pathologist and the Supportive Personnel member, and the relationship between a Speech-Language Pathologist and the patient/client.
  - d. Knowledge of contextual variables such as culture, gender, ethnicity, and economic issues.
  - e. Structuring to maximize supervision, including times and conditions of supervision sessions, problem solving ability, and implementing supervisor interventions within a range of supervisory modalities including live, videotape, audiotape, and case report methods.
4. A supervising Speech-Language Pathologist should maintain records related to continuing professional development in supervision

## **B. Amount and Type of supervision of the CASLPA Supportive Personnel member**

1. The supervising Speech-Language Pathologist is ultimately responsible for the patient/client as stated in the CASLPA Code of Ethics.
2. The amount and type of supervision required should be based on the skills and experience of the Supportive Personnel member, the needs of the patients/clients served, the service setting, the tasks assigned, and other pertinent factors.
3. Supervising Speech-Language Pathologists and/or Supportive Personnel must inform the patient/client and his/her family or other caregivers about the role of the Supportive Personnel in providing services and the role of the Speech-Language Pathologist in overseeing this service provision.
4. Supervisory Speech-Language Pathologists should be available to direct, support, and consult with Supportive Personnel at all times.
5. Information obtained during direct observation may include data related to:
  - a. Agreement (reliability) between the Supportive Personnel member and a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist on correct/incorrect judgment of target behaviour.
  - b. Accuracy in record keeping.
  - c. Ability to interact effectively with the patient/client and their caregivers and/or family.
6. Whenever areas (a) through (c) listed above fall below an agreed upon level [as determined by a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist and the Supportive Personnel member], the Supportive Personnel member should be retrained in those skills, and direct observation should be increased until an acceptable level of performance is evidenced.
7. In some instances, it may be necessary to change Supportive Personnel members' duties or relieve them of all duties if a high standard of proficiency cannot be attained or they repeatedly violate these guidelines.
8. Supervising Speech-Language Pathologists shall document their supervision of Supportive Personnel.

9. Supervising Speech-Language Pathologists should cite and approve all pertinent documentation and progress notes provided by the Supportive Personnel member.
10. It is not permissible for supervising Speech-Language Pathologists to receive payment from or otherwise be in the employment of Supportive Personnel who they supervise.
11. Whenever possible, the employer should ensure that an alternate means of supervision by another Speech-Language Pathologist can be provided when the primary supervising Speech-Language Pathologist is not available.
12. When a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist is unavailable and no other Speech-Language Pathologist is accessible, then the employer shall have a list of job activities that are within the prescribed scope of practice of Supportive Personnel in speech-language pathology that can be carried out in the absence of supervision. The member should ensure that the employer is aware that the Supportive Personnel cannot carry out a number of activities without supervision.
13. The number of Supportive Personnel to be supervised shall be based on the training and experience of the Supportive Personnel, risk of harm, effectiveness of intervention in the patient/client population and consistent with the delivery of appropriate, quality service.
14. If a supportive personnel is teaching a course in a supportive personnel training program, the content of the course should be approved by a speech-language pathologist/audiologist involved in the program.

## **6.0 Code of Ethics for Supportive Personnel**

---

### **A. Duties and Responsibilities to the Patients and the Public**

#### **Supportive Personnel...**

1. Shall meet national membership requirements.
2. Shall engage in only those aspects of practice that are within their own competence, considering their level of education, training, and experience, and within the competence of the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist or audiologist.
3. Shall not provide public or private services to clientele without a supervising Speech-Language Pathologist or an audiologist (direct or indirect).
4. Shall not discriminate in the delivery of services on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or disability. However, area of practice may be limited by age or disorder/specialty.
5. Shall not misrepresent, in any fashion, services rendered.
6. Shall maintain adequate records of services rendered and shall allow access to these records when appropriately authorized.
7. Shall not reveal, without authorization, any professional or personal information about the patient/client served unless required by law to do so, or unless doing so is necessary to protect the welfare of the person or the community.
8. Shall not accept compensation other than salary for services rendered.
9. Supportive Personnel whose services are adversely affected by substance abuse or other health-related conditions shall withdraw from the affected areas of practice where appropriate, seek professional assistance.

## **B. Duties and Responsibilities to the Supportive Personnel Profession**

### **Supportive Personnel...**

1. Shall not intentionally misrepresent their credentials, competence, education, training, or experience.
2. Shall continue their professional development throughout their careers.
3. Shall not disparage the skill, knowledge, or service of co-workers.

## **C. Legal Responsibilities**

1. Every Supportive Personnel member must abide by the Code of Ethics for Supportive Personnel. Each member may be subject to disciplinary review and procedures as outlined in CASLPA policies.
2. CASLPA may deny an application for a Supportive Personnel member in speech-language pathology/audiology or take disciplinary action against that member for any of the following:
  - a. Engaging in unprofessional conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
    - i. Incompetence or gross negligence in performing speech-language pathology or audiology Supportive Personnel functions, education, clinical work, or fieldwork.
    - ii. Procuring a license, certificate, or registration by fraud or misrepresentation.
  - b. Making or giving any false statement or information in connection with the member's application for Supportive Personnel membership.
  - c. Being convicted of a misdemeanor or felony substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of Supportive Personnel, in which event a copy of the record of conviction shall be conclusive evidence thereof.

- d. Impersonating a Speech-Language Pathologist, an audiologist or other Supportive Personnel, or permitting or allowing another person to use the member's registration for the purpose of practicing or holding themselves out as a Supportive Personnel member in speech-language pathology or audiology.
  - e. Violating or conspiring to violate, or aiding or abetting any person to violate the provisions of this article or any regulation adopted by CASLPA.
  - f. Intentional Misrepresentation as to the type or status of membership held, or otherwise intentionally misrepresenting or permitting misrepresentation of the member's education, professional qualifications, or professional affiliation to any person or entity.
  - g. Intentionally or recklessly causing physical or emotional harm to any patient/client.
  - h. Committing any dishonest, corrupt, or fraudulent act substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a Supportive Personnel member.
  - i. Condoning or engaging in sexual relations with a patient/client.
  - j. Failing to maintain confidentiality, except as otherwise required or permitted by law, of all information that has been received from a patient/client in confidence during the course of treatment and all information about the patient/client obtained from tests or other means.
  - k. Advertising in a manner that is false, misleading, or deceptive.
3. The legal, ethical and moral responsibility for patient/client management lies with the supervisory Speech-Language Pathologist or audiologist and Supportive Personnel.