

**American Speech & Hearing Association (ASHA)
POSITION STATEMENT¹ 2003**

**Roles of Speech-Language Pathologists and
Teachers of Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in
the Development of Communicative and Linguistic Competence**

It is the position of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and the Council on Education of the Deaf (CED) that the development of communicative competence (the ability to understand and use one or more languages effectively in a variety of sociocultural contexts) of children who are deaf or hard of hearing is best facilitated when the speech-language pathologist (SLP) and teacher of children who are deaf and hard of hearing (Teacher) work collaboratively to optimize each child's potential. This collaboration requires:

1. an understanding and respect for the unique background, educational preparation, knowledge, skills, and experience of participating professionals,
2. a recognition and appreciation of the shared knowledge, expertise, and responsibilities of the professionals; and
3. a consideration of programming and service delivery systems that stimulate the development of interpersonal communication skills and literacy.

Further, the development of communicative competence must be a fundamental component of early intervention and educational programs for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, age's birth through 21 years. To facilitate communicative competence children who are deaf or hard of hearing must be allowed to communicate through a variety of communication modalities, languages, and strategies. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of SLP's and Teachers in the development of communicative competence may be overlapping, complementary, and/or supplementary when collaborating to achieve optimal outcomes for the child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

SLP's and Teachers should have an understanding of the interrelationship of linguistic, cognitive, and social development as well as an understanding of how hearing loss, community, educational, and familial factors affect the overall development of the child. SLP's and Teachers must also establish communication and linguistic goals for purposes of the child's reaching developmental milestones and academic achievement comparable to hearing peers. Consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997, these goals must address the general education curriculum for school-age children.

¹ Reference: ASHA (2004) supplement, 24, p.57

Developed by: The Joint Committee of ASHA & The Council on Education of the Deaf

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CED's Executive Board in 2003