

Title 10 – Department of Health

Subtitle 41

Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers and Speech-Language Pathologists

Chapter 11 Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

.01 Definitions.

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

(1) "Board" means the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists.

(2) "Continuing education unit (CEU)" means 1 hour of attendance at a Board-approved program as described in COMAR 10.41.03.06.

(3) "Credit hour" means 1 academic credit hour of an academic course conducted by an accredited academic institution.

(4) "Delegation agreement" means an agreement between a speech-language pathology assistant and a supervising speech-language pathologist which identifies the supervising speech-language pathologist and the facility at which the speech-language pathology assistant will be practicing.

(5) "Direct supervision" means on-site, in-view, observation and guidance by a supervising speech-language pathologist while on an assigned activity.

(6) "Indirect supervision" means those activities other than direct observation and guidance conducted by a supervising speech-language pathologist including, but not limited to:

(a) Review of charts and records;

(b) Attendance at meetings; or

(c) Phone contact.

(7) "Speech-language pathology assistant" means an individual who:

(a) Assists the supervising speech-language pathologist clinically in the implementation of treatment and other defined activities; and

(b) Meets the minimum requirements set forth in this chapter.

(8) "Supervising speech-language pathologist" means an individual who meets all requirements set forth in this chapter and who:

(a) Is licensed by the Board; or

(b) In exempt settings, holds the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) in Speech-Language Pathology from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA).

(9) "Supervision" means both direct and indirect supervision.

.02 Speech-Language Pathology Assistant License.

The Board shall issue a speech-language pathology assistant license to an applicant who:

A. Meets the following qualifications:

(1) Has completed the educational requirements in Regulation .03A of this chapter;

(2) Has completed the clinical hours requirements in Regulation .03B of this chapter;

(3) Has obtained a limited license as a speech-language pathology assistant from the Board;

(4) Has completed a period of not less than 9 months of supervised practice as specified in Regulation .03C of this chapter; and

(5) Submits a competency checklist completed by the supervising speech-language pathologist to the Board; or

B. Meets the qualifications for waiver of requirements in Regulation .05 of this chapter.

.03 Requirements for a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant License.

A. Academic Curriculum Requirement.

(1) A speech-language pathology assistant shall demonstrate completion of one of the following requirements within the past 5 years:

(a) An associate's degree from an approved program for speech-language pathology assistants at an accredited institution;

(b) An associate's degree or higher in an allied health field from an accredited institution with minimum course work that includes at least 3 credit hours in each of the following areas:

(i) Normal speech-language development;

(ii) Speech disorders;

(iii) Anatomy and physiology of speech systems;

(iv) Language disorders; and

(v) Phonology; or

(c) A baccalaureate degree in speech-language pathology or communication science disorders from an accredited institution.

(2) The Board shall accept only course work completed with a grade of at least a "C" taken for credit.

(3) Academic course titles which are not self-explanatory shall be substantiated through course descriptions in official school catalogs or bulletins, or by other official means.

(4) Degrees or course work, or both, received at foreign universities are acceptable only if the course work and clinical practicum hours can be demonstrated, at the applicant's expense, to meet the requirements of this section.

B. Clinical Hours Requirement.

(1) A speech-language pathology assistant shall demonstrate at the time of application for licensure:

(a) Completion of at least 25 hours of clinical observation and 75 hours of clinical assisting experience in an associate's program; or

(b) 25 observation and 75 clinical practice hours as a speech-language pathology student in a bachelor's or master's program obtained within an educational institution or in one of the educational institution's cooperating programs.

(2) Alternative Method for Completion of Clinical Hours.

(a) If an applicant has not obtained the hours required in §B(1) of this regulation, the applicant may file with the Board a written plan for an alternative method to obtain the hours which shall include:

(i) A plan for the clinical observation, or clinical assisting experience, or both, designed and signed by the supervising speech-language pathologist;

(ii) Further information or revisions as requested by the Board;

(iii) An application for limited licensure; and

(iv) A fee for limited licensure.

(b) The plan for obtaining the 75 hours of clinical assistance shall include 100 percent direct supervision by the supervising speech-language pathologist of the speech-language pathologist assistant during any client contact hours.

(c) The Board shall approve the plan and issue the limited license before any clinical observation or clinical assisting experience may be obtained.

(d) The limited licensee shall then complete the hours in accordance with the Board-approved plan within 60 days.

(e) If the Board does not receive proof of successful completion of the hours by the end of 90 days, the limited assistant license is void and the speech-language pathology assistant may reapply.

C. Supervised Practice Requirement.

(1) A speech-language pathology assistant shall have a limited license from the Board before beginning supervised practice.

(2) The Board shall issue a limited license to practice as a speech-language pathology assistant to an applicant who:

(a) Is of good moral character;

(b) Meets the qualifications indicated in §A of this regulation and:

(i) Has completed the requirements of §B(1) of this regulation; or

(ii) Has submitted a plan approved by the Board as provided in §B(2) of this regulation;

(c) Submits the completed application and fee to the Board; and

(d) Submits a delegation agreement to the Board for each supervising speech-language pathologist.

(3) During the period of limited licensure, the speech-language pathology assistant shall:

(a) Practice only under the supervision of:

(i) A fully licensed speech-language pathologist; or

(ii) In an exempt setting, an individual who holds a Certificate of Clinical Competence in speech-language pathology from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association;

(b) Demonstrate completion, within the first 60 days, under direct supervision as documented by the supervising speech-language pathologist of:

(i) At least 25 hours of clinical observation earned during the educational training or on the job, or both; and

(ii) A cumulative total of 75 hours of clinical assistance earned during the educational training or on the job, or both; and

(c) Practice a minimum of 9 months under a limited license.

(4) The limited license shall expire 12 months after its effective date.

(5) The supervising speech-language pathologist shall ensure that the speech-language pathology assistant demonstrates successful completion of the Board's competency skills checklist.

(6) The speech-language pathology assistant shall submit the completed competency skills checklist to the Board at least 60 days before the limited license expiration date.

.04 Issuance of Speech-Language Pathology Assistant License.

A. The Board shall issue a speech-language pathology assistant license to a limited licensee who:

(1) Has successfully completed the requirements of the limited licensure period; or

(2) Meets the qualifications for waiver of requirements in Regulation .05 of this chapter.

B. A speech-language pathology assistant shall complete a delegation agreement for each supervising speech-language pathologist.

.05 Waiver of Requirements—Speech-Language Pathology Assistants.

A. The Board may waive the qualifications required for a license to practice as a speech-language pathology assistant under this chapter for an individual who:

(1) Is of good moral character;

- (2) Pays the application fee required by the Board under COMAR 10.41.01;
- (3) Has been working as a speech-language pathology assistant for at least 2 years;
- (4) Has completed the educational requirements in Regulation .03A of this chapter;
- (5) Possesses sufficient qualifications which have been documented by a supervising speech-language pathologist, through completion of the speech-language pathology assistant competency skills checklist; and
- (6) Completes a delegation agreement for each supervising speech-language pathologist.

B. The Board may waive any of the qualifications required for a license to practice as a speech-language pathology assistant under this chapter for an individual who:

- (1) Holds a valid registration as a speech-language pathology assistant from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association;
- (2) Holds a valid license, certification, or registration as a speech language pathology assistant in another state whose qualifications for a speech-language pathology assistant are equivalent to the qualifications for a speech-language pathology assistant in this State; or
- (3) Qualifies under the waiver of requirements provided in §A of this regulation.

.06 Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice.

A. A speech-language pathology assistant may provide only services which assist the direct services provided by a supervising speech-language pathologist, and not services which are alternatives to direct services.

B. Activities within the scope of practice of a speech-language pathology assistant shall include the following:

- (1) Engaging only in those duties planned, designed, and supervised by a supervising speech-language pathologist;
- (2) Following treatment plans or protocols developed by the supervising speech-language pathologist who maintains professional responsibility for the plans of care;
- (3) Adhering at all times to the code of ethics of the Board;
- (4) Identifying the licensee as a speech-language pathology assistant to consumers and co-professionals;

(5) Following specified screening protocols developed by the supervising speech-language pathologist when conducting speech-language screenings; and

(6) Reporting documented evidence of treatment and non-interpretive data regarding the client's performance to the supervising speech-language pathologist.

C. Activities within the scope of practice of a speech-language pathology assistant may include the following:

(1) Performing preparation of materials;

(2) Scheduling activities;

(3) Preparing charts, records, graphs, and other clerical duties;

(4) Performing checks and maintenance of equipment; and

(5) Participating with the supervising speech-language pathologist in research projects, in-service training, and public relations programs.

D. Activities not within the scope of practice of a speech-language pathology assistant include:

(1) Performing or interpreting the results of diagnostic evaluations;

(2) Participating in parent conferences, case conferences, or interdisciplinary team meetings without the presence of the supervising speech-language pathologist, or other licensed speech-language pathologist designated by the supervising speech-language pathologist;

(3) Providing client or family counseling;

(4) Selecting clients for services;

(5) Discharging a client from services;

(6) Making referral recommendations;

(7) Disclosing clinical or confidential information either orally or in writing to anyone other than the supervising speech-language pathologist; or

(8) Providing specialized dysphagia treatment that requires advanced knowledge and training.

.07 Requirements of the Supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.

A. A supervising speech-language pathologist is responsible for the direction of all client services provided by a speech-language pathology assistant.

B. A licensed full-time (35 hours or more a week) speech-language pathologist may not supervise more than the equivalent of two full-time (35 hours or more a week) speech-language pathology assistants.

C. A licensed part-time (less than 35 hours a week) speech-language pathologist may not supervise more than the equivalent of one full-time (35 hours a week) speech-language pathology assistant.

D. A supervising speech-language pathologist shall:

(1) Have a minimum of 3 years work experience (2 years since receipt of full license or ASHA-CCC) as a speech-language pathologist;

(2) Maintain on-going contact with all clients seen by a speech-language pathology assistant by participating in:

(a) Not less than one session every 2 weeks of in-person contact per client if the client is being seen three times per week or more; or

(b) Not less than one session per month of in-person contact per client if the client is being seen two times per week or less;

(3) Provide supervision of the speech-language pathology assistant that is a combination of direct on-site activities and indirect activities;

(4) Be on-site to supervise the speech-language pathology assistant a minimum of 2 times per month;

(5) Conduct and maintain performance evaluations of the speech language pathology assistant within the first 3 months and at least annually thereafter, that are cosigned by both the supervising speech-language pathologist and the speech-language pathology assistant;

(6) Provide a copy of the signed performance evaluation to the speech-language pathology assistant;

(7) Maintain documentation of client contact and supervisory activities of the speech-language pathology assistant; and

(8) Have the authority to combine in-person client contact and on-site supervision of the speech-language pathology assistant when appropriate.

.08 Term and Renewal of Speech-Language Pathology Assistant License.

- A. A speech-language pathology assistant license expires on the date set by the Board, unless it is renewed for an additional term as provided in this regulation.
- B. A license may not be renewed for a term longer than 2 years.
- C. At least 1 month before the license expires, the Board shall notify the speech-language pathology assistant of the date the license expires and the procedures for renewing the license.
- D. The speech-language pathology assistant is responsible for renewing licensure.
- E. The speech-language pathology assistant may apply to renew the license for another term if the speech-language pathology assistant:
 - (1) Is otherwise entitled to be licensed;
 - (2) Pays the renewal fee set by the Board; and
 - (3) Submits to the Board:
 - (a) A renewal application on the form the Board requires;
 - (b) Satisfactory evidence of compliance with any continuing education requirements under Regulation .09 of this chapter; and
 - (c) A delegation agreement for each supervising speech-language pathologist.

.09 Continuing Education Requirements (CEU) for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants.

- A. A speech-language pathology assistant shall obtain CEUs as a means of staying current in the field.
- B. The speech-language pathology assistant shall earn a minimum of ten CEUs as a condition of renewal as follows:
 - (1) Five CEUs in the area of clinical practice; and
 - (2) Five CEUs in work-related areas.
- C. The speech-language pathology assistant shall retain records documenting completion of CEUs.

D. At the time of license renewal, the Board shall audit 25 percent of the speech-language pathology assistants for compliance with the continuing education requirement.

E. If the speech-language pathology assistant is audited by the Board, the speech-language pathology assistant shall submit to the Board the following:

- (1) A copy of the most recent performance evaluation;
- (2) An application for license renewal; and
- (3) Documentation of earned CEUs.