

Position Paper on the Role of Speech-Language Pathologists in School-Based Literacy

Executive Summary

Purpose

This executive summary outlines Speech-Language & Audiology Canada's (SAC) position on the Role of the speech-language pathologists (S-LPs) in School-based Literacy, highlighting the key arguments, supporting evidence, and recommended actions for stakeholders and interested parties.

Background

Concerns have been raised by SAC members and associates about inconsistent recognition and integration of S-LPs in school based-based literacy efforts, Across Canada, there is a lack of awareness about the unique and essential contributions S-LPs bring to reading and writing development. Additionally, the involvement of S-LPs in the area of reading and writing varies widely from one school setting to another, even within the same geographical region.

This position paper was created to promote and advocate for S-LPs' critical role as collaborators within the school team to ensure that all students can rightfully access high-quality literacy support at school.

Position

It is the position of SAC that S-LPs play a critical role supporting literacy development within Canadian education systems. School-based S-LP literacy support must be implemented in a collaborative and interdisciplinary context alongside educators and other professional support staff.

Key Arguments

This position is held on the basis that S-LPs:

1. possess unique expertise in the fundamentals of reading and writing and their foundations in language;
2. provide expert guidance and support to educators to maximize the impact of classroom literacy screening, assessment, and instruction; and



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3. deliver evidence-based, impactful literacy support (including, but not limited to: prevention assessment, consultation, intervention, and advocacy for reading and writing difficulties) to students of all abilities.

Recommendations

SAC recommends the following steps to address this issue:

1. Investing in S-LP services in schools.
2. Advocating for increased school-based S-LP and educator collaboration to support effective, evidence-based literacy practices.
3. Supporting S-LPs in their efforts to maintain and enhance their clinical competency in literacy.
4. Fully leveraging S-LPs' knowledge to promote inclusive, equitable, and evidence-based literacy practices in schools.

Conclusion

S-LPs make critical contributions to Canada's education systems by ensuring that reading and writing proficiency is accessible to all students. SAC wishes to highlight the essential role that S-LPs can play in collaborative practice with other school-based professionals (e.g., teaching staff, psychologists, and educators) who can all provide indispensable literacy support.

This executive summary accompanies the SAC position paper, *The Role of Speech-Language Pathologists in School-Based Literacy*, [available to members](#).