

# Speech pathology in the literacy domain

Prevention, identification and management of literacy difficulties

The inclusive  
education  
team

Speech language pathologists (SLPs) are integral members of inclusive educational teams supporting students of all ages with speech, language and communication challenges to achieve their academic and personal potential. Speech language pathology services promote an inclusive education environment that benefits all students.

Language and  
literacy

Speech pathologists have a critical role in the prevention, identification and management of literacy difficulties from infancy to adolescence (Speech Pathology Australia 2020). Successful development of reading and writing is founded on language skills that originally develop in the oral modality. The meaning of written words, sentences and text can only be accessed if their spoken form is understood. Furthermore, decoding and encoding written language is dependent on the capacity to attend to and manipulate individual speech sounds.

Evidence-  
based practice

Evidence-based practice is key in all aspects of speech language pathology service delivery in schools, with SLPs being uniquely positioned to make contributions to literacy education that reflect current research and methodologies. SLPs are essential members of school literacy teams because of the breadth and depth of their knowledge about typical and disordered speech, language and literacy development, in both monolingual and multilingual environments.

Support for  
teachers

Research shows that teachers want support to adopt literacy practices aligned with current scientific evidence (Buckingham and Meeks, 2019; International Literacy Association and National Council of Teachers of English, 2017). A large body of literature suggests that instructional coaching enhances teachers' capacity to make changes in their practice; and that coaching within classrooms is a high yield strategy in delivering literacy outcomes for students (Hemmeter, McCollum and Ostrosky 2009; Neuman and Cunningham 2009;). The provision of coaching by SLPs is a natural and effective extension of their consultative and collaborative role within a whole school approach (Milburn, Weitzman, Greenburg and Girolemetto 2014).

Reasonable  
adjustments

SLPs support educators to plan and implement evidence-based literacy practices that address students' interrelated language and literacy skills and inform reasonable adjustments.

The Language  
and Literacy  
Team

For more information, contact your school speech language pathologist or the Reading and Writing Disorders Advisory Service. The Advisory service may be accessed by telephone or email on weekdays between 8:30am and 4:30pm.

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