

Audiology Assistants in Educational Audiology Settings

The purpose of an assistant is to support the lead professional in performing routine duties. For audiology, the assistant performs tasks that are prescribed, directed and supervised by a licensed educational audiologist. This support enables the educational audiologist to focus on more complex responsibilities related to student care.

Educational audiologists should identify appropriate activities that align with local needs and comply with state regulations. States, provinces and territories differ greatly in licensure laws, regulations, supervision and language for assistants. Some states require specialized training from the Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC), while other states have no policies at all. It is important to be familiar with the rules of your state as they are the guidelines that will need to be followed for training, scope of practice and supervision of assistants. You can view these at <https://www.audiologyassistants.com/state-requirements>.

Educational audiologists must ensure that the assistant demonstrates adequate skills and competency for the services they provide. Competency can be gained through educational opportunities and hands-on training.

Trained tasks that are appropriate for assistants to perform in educational settings include:

- Daily checks and routine maintenance of hearing screening and evaluation equipment
- Daily listening checks for personal hearing instruments and remote microphone hearing assistance technology
- Routine maintenance and minor repairs for personal hearing instruments
- Infection control duties
- Electroacoustic analysis of hearing aids and devices (with results interpreted by the audiologist)
- Implement hearing screenings (according to established protocols with results interpreted by the educational audiologist)
- Student preparation for hearing and electrophysiologic testing
- Hearing loss prevention education with students
- Support to educational audiologist with audiological assessments
- Support to educational audiologist with habilitation services
- Data management
- Support research projects
- Administrative support functions including scheduling, packaging, and mailing orders and devices

Assistants should never be confused with a licensed audiologist and should have identification that clearly states their title to students and school professionals.

Tasks that are not appropriate for assistants include:

- Determine the need for assessment or the types of tests to be administered
- Conduct protocols for comprehensive evaluation
- Interpret assessment and intervention data
- Bill for Medicaid reimbursement
- Compose IEP goals or interventions for 504 Plans
- Compose or sign reports or formal documents
- Counsel students and parents
- Refer students for additional services

- Provide intervention or services without the direct supervision of an educational audiologist
- Attend meetings directly related to students without the presence of a supervising educational audiologist

The ethical use of assistants can lead to positive outcomes within educational audiology practices by increasing student access to audiological services, while reducing wait times and increasing productivity (AAA, 1997). It is also a means for school systems to support educational audiologists that are often serving caseloads beyond the recommended 1:10,000 enrolled students.

American Academy of Audiology. (Retrieved 6/4/2020). Audiology Assistants. <https://www.audiology.org/publications-resources/document-library/audiologists-assistant>

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