**A+ Assessments with Your SLPA**

**Workshop Handout**

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**Oklahoma Speech-Language-Hearing Association Conference**  
**November 7, 2025**

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Summarize guidance and regulatory resources related to SLPA supervision and practice
2. Describe methods for ensuring SLPA competency in assessment-related tasks
3. Design ethical ways for an SLPA to assist with the assessment process

**Oklahoma Regulations: What Can SLPAs Do?**

**✅ ALLOWED Activities (OAC 690:10-7-10)**

* Assist the SLP with **speech-language and hearing screenings**
* Assist with **informal documentation** as directed by the SLP
* Follow documented treatment plans or protocols
* **Document patient/client performance**
* **Assist the SLP with assessment** of patients/clients
* Assist with clerical duties
* Perform equipment checks and maintenance

**❌ NON-ALLOWED Activities (OAC 690:10-7-10)**

* **May NOT perform diagnostic tests, formal or informal evaluations, or interpret test results**
* May NOT evaluate or diagnose patients/clients
* May NOT participate in parent conferences, case conferences, or interdisciplinary teams **without the presence or prior approval** of the supervising SLP
* May NOT write, develop, or modify a patient's individualized treatment plan without prior approval
* May NOT assist with patients/clients without following the individualized treatment plan or without access to supervision
* May NOT sign any formal documents not drafted/approved by the SLP

**The Assessment Question: What Does "Assist" Mean?**

**The Confusion**

Oklahoma regulations state SLPAs can **"assist the speech-language pathologist with assessment"** but **"may NOT perform diagnostic tests, formal or informal evaluations or interpret test results."**

So what's the difference between assisting and performing?

**The Solution: A Competency-Based Approach**

Think of assessment as a **multi-step process**:

1. **Pre-Assessment Preparation** (clerical/administrative)
2. **Test Administration** (direct client interaction)
3. **Scoring** (calculation/data entry)
4. **Interpretation** (clinical judgment)
5. **Report Writing** (documentation)
6. **Results Discussion** (professional communication)

**Key Principle:** SLPAs can assist with tasks that don't require clinical judgment or interpretation.

**Framework for Ethical SLPA Involvement in Assessment**

**Phase 1: Pre-Assessment (✅ Appropriate for SLPAs)**

* Scheduling appointments
* Preparing assessment materials
* Setting up testing environment
* Gathering case history forms
* Organizing client files
* Reviewing previous records (for information gathering, not interpretation)

**Phase 2: Test Administration (⚠️ Requires Careful Consideration)**

**Publisher Guidelines Vary:**

* Some standardized tests specify minimum qualifications for examiners
* Many require graduate-level training in assessment
* Check each test manual for administration requirements

**General Principles:**

* SLPAs should NOT administer standardized norm-referenced tests that require clinical judgment during administration
* SLPAs MAY assist with structured tasks under direct supervision (e.g., eliciting language samples, administering informal probes)
* The SLP maintains responsibility for all clinical decisions

**Examples:**

✅ **Appropriate:**

* Collecting a language sample using SLP-provided protocols
* Administering informal phoneme probes from a structured list
* Completing behavioral observations using an SLP-created checklist
* Assisting with hearing screenings (per regulations)

❌ **Not Appropriate:**

* Administering standardized tests independently (CELF-5, PLS-5, GFTA-3, etc.)
* Making clinical decisions during test administration
* Modifying test procedures
* Determining whether to continue or discontinue testing

**Phase 3: Scoring (✅ Appropriate with Training)**

* Calculating raw scores from completed test forms
* Transferring scores to score sheets
* Data entry into computer scoring programs
* **The SLP verifies all scoring and maintains responsibility**

**Phase 4: Interpretation (❌ NOT Appropriate)**

* Analysis of test results
* Comparison to norms
* Clinical judgment about performance
* Diagnostic conclusions
* **This is exclusively the SLP's responsibility**

**Phase 5: Documentation (⚠️ Limited Assistance)**

✅ **SLPAs can:**

* Type/transcribe language samples
* Enter data into report templates
* Format documents
* Complete demographic information

❌ **SLPAs cannot:**

* Write clinical impressions
* Make diagnostic statements
* Sign formal assessment reports

**Phase 6: Communication of Results (❌ NOT Appropriate)**

* Parent/teacher conferences about results
* IEP/IFSP meetings
* Medical consultations
* **The SLP presents and discusses all assessment findings**

**Ensuring SLPA Competency for Assessment Tasks**

**Before Delegating Assessment Tasks:**

**1. Verify Training**

* Review SLPA's academic preparation related to assessment
* Check for specific training in tasks you plan to delegate
* Consider the SLPA's previous experience

**2. Provide Task-Specific Training**

* Demonstrate the specific task
* Observe the SLPA completing the task
* Provide feedback and correction
* Document competency achievement

**3. Start with Direct Supervision**

* Initially supervise assessment assistance directly
* Gradually move to indirect supervision as competency is demonstrated
* Continue regular observation and feedback

**4. Document Everything**

* Create written protocols for assessment tasks
* Document training provided
* Document competency verification
* Maintain supervision logs

**Red Flags: When NOT to Delegate**

❌ The task requires clinical judgment  
❌ The task involves standardized test administration  
❌ The SLPA hasn't been trained on this specific task  
❌ You cannot provide adequate supervision  
❌ The publisher guidelines prohibit delegation  
❌ You feel uncertain about whether it's appropriate

**When in doubt, don't delegate!**

**Practical Scenarios: Is This Ethical?**

**Scenario 1: Language Sample Collection**

**Question:** Can my SLPA collect a conversational language sample?

**Answer:** ✅ YES, with proper training and protocols

* Provide specific instructions on elicitation techniques
* Give structured topics or activities to use
* Have the SLPA record (audio/video) the sample
* The SLP analyzes and interprets the sample

**Scenario 2: Articulation Screening**

**Question:** Can my SLPA complete articulation screenings?

**Answer:** ✅ YES, per Oklahoma regulations

* SLPAs can "assist with speech-language and hearing screenings"
* Provide a structured screening protocol
* The SLP reviews all results and makes decisions about follow-up

**Scenario 3: CELF-5 Administration**

**Question:** Can my SLPA administer the CELF-5 while I observe?

**Answer:** ❌ NO

* The CELF-5 requires clinical judgment during administration
* Publisher guidelines specify examiner qualifications
* Even with supervision, this exceeds SLPA scope

**Scenario 4: Scoring Completed Tests**

**Question:** Can my SLPA score the GFTA-3 after I've administered it?

**Answer:** ⚠️ MAYBE, with verification

* Calculating raw scores is a clerical task
* The SLP must verify all scoring
* The SLPA cannot interpret the scores
* Check your liability insurance coverage

**Scenario 5: IEP Meeting Attendance**

**Question:** Can my SLPA attend the IEP meeting to discuss assessment results?

**Answer:** ❌ NO, not to present results

* SLPAs cannot present or interpret assessment findings
* The SLPA could attend as a support person with SLP present and prior approval
* The SLP maintains responsibility for all professional communication

**Creating Your Assessment Assistance Protocol**

**Step 1: Identify Assessment Tasks**

List all the tasks involved in your typical assessment process.

**Step 2: Categorize Tasks**

**Administrative/Clerical** → Safe to delegate  
**Requires Clinical Judgment** → NOT delegable  
**Structured Data Collection** → May be delegable with training

**Step 3: Check Guidelines**

* Oklahoma regulations
* Test publisher requirements
* Your facility policies
* Your professional liability insurance

**Step 4: Develop Protocols**

Create written procedures for any tasks you'll delegate, including:

* Step-by-step instructions
* When to contact the SLP
* Documentation requirements

**Step 5: Train and Document**

* Provide training
* Observe competency
* Document everything

**Step 6: Supervise and Monitor**

* Provide ongoing supervision
* Review work products
* Give regular feedback

**Quick Reference: Assessment Task Checklist**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Task | SLPA Role | SLP Role |
| Schedule appointments | ✅ Can complete independently | Oversees schedule |
| Prepare materials | ✅ Can complete independently | Provides direction |
| Collect case history | ✅ Can assist | Reviews and clarifies |
| Administer standardized tests | ❌ Cannot do | SLP responsibility |
| Collect language sample | ✅ Can do with training | Provides protocol, analyzes |
| Complete informal probes | ✅ Can do with protocol | Creates protocol, interprets |
| Score tests (raw scores) | ⚠️ Can assist | Verifies and interprets |
| Calculate standard scores | ⚠️ Can assist | Verifies and interprets |
| Interpret results | ❌ Cannot do | SLP responsibility |
| Write report | ❌ Cannot do | SLP responsibility |
| Present findings | ❌ Cannot do | SLP responsibility |

**Bottom Line Principles**

1. **When in doubt, check it out** (regulations, guidelines, supervisors)
2. **Clinical judgment = SLP only**
3. **Documentation is your protection**
4. **Competency before delegation**
5. **Supervision is not optional**
6. **The SLP is always responsible**

**Resources**

**Oklahoma Regulations**

* [Oklahoma Administrative Code Title 690](https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/obespa/documents/Title_690%20New2022.pdf)
  + Chapter 10: Licensure and Fees (especially Subchapter 7)
  + Chapter 15: Rules of Practice (Code of Ethics)
* [Oklahoma Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology website](https://oklahoma.gov/obespa/about/act-rules.html)

**ASHA Resources**

* [Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice](https://www.asha.org/policy/slpa-scope-of-practice/)
* [Guidelines for Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Supervision](https://www.asha.org/policy/slpa-scope-of-practice/#sec1.13)
* [ASHA Practice Portal: SLPAs](https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/speech-language-pathology-assistants/)

**Professional Organizations**

* [Oklahoma Speech-Language-Hearing Association (OSHA)](https://www.oslha.org/)
* [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)](https://www.asha.org/)

**Notes & Action Items**

*Use this space to jot down ideas for your practice:*

**Tasks I currently delegate to my SLPA:**

**Tasks I want to start delegating:**

**Training needs I've identified:**

**Questions I still have:**

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