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ASSOCIATION

Evidence-Based Practice in Communication Disorders

Joint Coordinating Committee on Evidence-Based Practice

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About This Document

This position statement was developed by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Joint Coordinating Committee on Evidence-Based Practice. Members of the committee included Randall R. Robey (chair); Kenn Apel; Christine A. Dollaghan; Wendy Ellmo; Nancy E. Hall; Thomas M. Helfer; Mary Pat Moeller; Travis T. Threats; Celia R. Hooper, 2003–2005 vice president for professional practices in speech-language pathology; Raymond D. Kent, 2004–2006 vice president for research and technology; Janet Brown (ex officio); and Brenda L. Lonsbury-Martin (ASHA staff consultant).

This position statement is an official policy document of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

Evidence-Based Practice in Communication Disorders

It is the position of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association that audiologists and speech-language pathologists incorporate the principles of evidence-based practice in clinical decision making to provide high quality clinical care. The term *evidence-based practice* refers to an approach in which current, high-quality research evidence is integrated with practitioner expertise and client preferences and values into the process of making clinical decisions.

In making clinical practice evidence-based, audiologists and speech-language pathologists—

- recognize the needs, abilities, values, preferences, and interests of individuals and families to whom they provide clinical services, and integrate those factors along with best current research evidence and their clinical expertise in making clinical decisions;
- acquire and maintain the knowledge and skills that are necessary to provide high quality professional services, including knowledge and skills related to evidence-based practice;
- evaluate prevention, screening, and diagnostic procedures, protocols, and measures to identify maximally informative and cost-effective diagnostic and screening tools, using recognized appraisal criteria described in the evidence-based practice literature;
- evaluate the efficacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of clinical protocols for prevention, treatment, and enhancement using criteria recognized in the evidence-based practice literature;
- evaluate the quality of evidence appearing in any source or format, including journal articles, textbooks, continuing education offerings, newsletters, advertising, and Web-based products, prior to incorporating such evidence into clinical decision making; and
- monitor and incorporate new and high quality research evidence having implications for clinical practice.