

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Audiology Assistant

Class Code: 050630

Pay Grade: GG

A. Purpose:

Under supervision of the South Dakota Services for the Deaf (SDSD), plans, organizes, and executes hearing screenings to support early identification of childhood hearing loss initiatives inside and outside the clinic setting under the supervision of a registered licensed audiologist.

B. Distinguishing Feature

The Audiology Assistant works under both the direct and indirect supervision of a licensed audiologist in a variety of settings including daycares and schools, performing selected tasks in patient care, assessment, and follow-up. The position primarily includes planning, organizing, and executing hearing screenings to support early identification of childhood hearing loss initiatives. The position supports the Child Find mandate under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Maternal and Child Health Bureau initiatives under Health Resources & Service Administration (HRSA).

C. Functions

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples, nor do the listed examples or include all functions that may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Provides support to SDSD service provision efforts, including but not limited to the hearing screening program and SDSD Audiology Clinic/department.
 - a. Provides draft audiology screening schedule, communicates schedule changes to appropriate staff, and maintains screening schedule in the electronic medical record.
 - b. Coordinates with facilities on the necessary documentation, equipment, space, interpreters, and acoustic needs for hearing screenings with consideration of appropriate regulatory standards.
 - c. Ensures proper preparation for screenings by ensuring equipment is available and calibrated and supplies and inventory are appropriately stocked.
 - d. Coordinates appropriate travel, staffing needs, and/or driving and setting up Mobile Audiology Lab.
 - e. Promotes SDSD services.
 - f. Assists with a wide variety of audiology clinic duties, including both direct and indirect patient care.

2. Executes hearing screenings as part of the large-scale SDSD Hearing Screening Program.
 - a. Properly sets up necessary equipment (audiometer, otoacoustic emissions device, and tympanometer).
 - b. Ensures acceptable noise limits are met on-site using a sound level meter.
 - c. Completes hearing screenings in accordance with ASHA/AAA/supervising audiologist(s) guidance.

- d. Delineates appropriate test parameters are completed, identifies any potentially erroneous results, and troubleshoots as needed in order to effectively identify accurate results (pass, refer-rescreen, and refer-full evaluation results).
 - e. Properly records screening results and creates and provides documentation to the school.
 - f. Identifies students for whom a high level of concern for hearing loss may exist based on screening results and other subjectively reported information. Informs supervising audiologist appropriately.
 - g. Coordinates with agency personnel, school personnel, parents, and SDSD outreach staff regarding students with specific audiologic concerns.
3. Assists Audiologists in Clinical Care
- a. Reviews client files, identifies needed records, and communicates with outreach consultants or parents to obtain records from parents, medical agencies, and schools.
 - b. Documents accurate and complete case history, relaying pertinent information to the audiologist. This may include outside records.
 - c. Assists with common evaluation and procedures, such as behavioral observation audiometry, visual reinforcement audiometry, conditioned play audiometry, and/or conventional audiometry.
 - d. Assists in additional audiologic procedures including but not limited to otoscopy; tympanometry; otoacoustic emissions; auditory brainstem response (ABR); earmold impressions and fittings; hearing aid maintenance, verification, and troubleshooting.
 - e. Transfers test results into the electronic medical record, records test results, or scans in test results, as applicable.
 - f. Accurately scores questionnaires.
4. Ensures proper maintenance of equipment and stocking of appropriate supplies.
- a. Coordinates annual calibration and conducts biologic checks of audiology equipment.
 - b. Troubleshoots equipment and coordinates with audiologist for any repairs or new orders.
 - c. Coordinates service provisions, maintenance, and repairs for clinical, screening, and Mobile Lab equipment, as well as assigned or shared state vehicles.
 - d. Maintains appropriate infection control procedures and follows appropriate sanitization procedures.
5. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Supervised by the Director of Audiology or clinical audiologist(s). Typically, no subordinates report to this classification; however, may provide work direction to new staff.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to conduct screenings and assist with audiologic evaluations on young children of varying abilities; understand screening results, particularly those that may be partially incomplete due to child abilities; manage a large contact list; and balance multiple tasks simultaneously.

Typical problems facing the incumbent include intermittent communication with coordinating entities; coordinating and maintaining often conflicting schedules; troubleshooting faulty equipment; identifying potentially erroneous results; and staying knowledgeable of changing rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.

F. Decision-making Authority:

The audiology assistants are supervised both directly and often indirectly at clinical sites and must be able to conduct hearing screenings in an appropriate manner, adhering to any local, state, or national guidelines. These positions are frequently the initial line of interpretation for all screenings completed. They determine which steps of the screening may or may not need to be completed and how to effectively proceed based on provided, incomplete, or partial results, as well as how to identify potentially erroneous results, and effectively troubleshoot results that do not coincide. This position requires a level of training and knowledge beyond that of an automated pass or refer criteria and is essential in determining which children may require further follow-up and, if so, what type of follow-up. The required knowledge and training are crucial to the effective and efficient function of the large-scale hearing screening program SDSD executes for tens of thousands of children across South Dakota each year. Proper execution of this program aims to yield high-level sensitivity and specificity in early identification of childhood hearing loss, leading to earlier identification, decreasing childhood developmental delays, and decreasing the costs of special education to the school districts/state.

Decisions referred include interpretation of results beyond pass/refer for rescreen/refer for full evaluation; specific referrals to other healthcare professionals; diagnosis of hearing loss; recommendation of treatment and/or changes to current treatment plans; cerumen management; changes to content of written chart notes or reports; release of information regarding a student without proper FERPA/HIPAA documentation; and purchasing of equipment.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily interaction with individuals of all ages and abilities being screened; individuals assigned to assist in completing screenings; healthcare providers; and outside agencies for continuity of care, to obtain appropriate documentation, schedule screenings, and promote SDSD services.

H. Working Conditions:

Requires daily and overnight travel to screening sites; frequent work with children and adults, including those with neurodevelopmental and related disorders; frequent lifting of 5-10 pounds; and occasional lifting of up to 20 pounds with or without assistance. Duties may be performed in a clinic setting, mobile audiology lab, classroom, daycare, or other public venue.

I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- applicable regulatory standards including American National Standards Institute (ANSI), American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), and American Academy of Audiology (AAA);
- applicable privacy laws and guidelines;

- practices, procedures, and troubleshooting of modern office and audiological equipment;
- anatomy and physiology of the auditory system;
- the South Dakota Services for the Deaf programs and procedures.

Ability to:

- conduct appropriate decision-making based on knowledge and training both on the job and via audiology assistant certification;
- write clearly/accurately both manually and electronically;
- utilize, maintain, and troubleshoot specialized software and equipment;
- accomplish assigned professional tasks;
- exercise tact and discretion in clear/concise communication with persons of varying backgrounds, cultures, and temperaments;
- establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff and the public;
- maintain a high degree of flexibility and effectively manage duties with numerous interruptions;
- take direction to execute daily activities;
- communicate information clearly and concisely;
- assign appropriate priorities to work activities based on organizational goals.

J. Licenses and Certifications:

Must possess or be able to obtain an Audiology Assistant Certification, preferably with reference to diagnostics or pediatrics, within one year of hire date.