



## **SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS IN SCHOOLS**

The National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP) is the coalition of organizations representing the professionals who provide critical supports to enable student success. Specialized instructional support personnel (SISP) perform a wide range of activities in schools, including a broad array of prevention and intervention services that promote effective teaching and learning and promote school success. NASISP organizations represent over a million members, including school counselors, school nurses, psychologists, school psychologists, social workers and school social workers; occupational therapists, physical therapists, art therapists, dance/movement therapists, and music therapists; speech-language pathologists and audiologists. NASISP also includes member organizations representing teachers, parents, and administrators supporting the critical work of specialized instructional support personnel. NASISP promotes interdisciplinary practice and collaboration, and advocates for ensuring access to quality specialized supports for all students.

### **Educational Audiology Services**

Educational audiologists have the unique expertise to support children with hearing loss and auditory processing disorders in accessing classroom curricula. Educational audiologists are trained and licensed to provide a variety of services that include: the fitting and maintenance of technology such as, personal FM and soundfield systems; in-service training, counseling and guidance to support personnel, teachers and parents; participation on IEP teams; diagnostic assessment of hearing loss and auditory processing disorders; earmold modifications and fittings; hearing aid repair and trouble-shooting; functional assessment of classroom performance; hearing screening; hearing conservation education, assessment and management of classroom acoustics and a variety of other services that enhance the ability of the schools to provide access to education for all children, particularly those with hearing disorders. Audiologists hold either a master's or a doctoral degree and are licensed in their state to practice. ASHA certified audiologists have graduated from an accredited program and have passed a national examination to earn a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). *For information contact: Anne Oyler, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, [aoyler@asha.org](mailto:aoyler@asha.org). Visit the ASHA website at [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org).*

### **Art Therapy Services**

In the school setting, art therapy provides opportunities for positive experiences that translate into enhanced classroom functioning and increased ability to benefit from educational services. Art therapy can be tailored to support academic and social/emotional requirements. Art therapists work with teachers, parents, school counselors, and school psychologists to coordinate art therapy referral, assessment, and treatment. When a student is assessed for art therapy services and is deemed eligible for treatment, the art therapist establishes individual goals and objectives in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students in individual art therapy may work toward

improved cognitive growth, emotional control, the mastery of sensory-motor skills, and positive adjustment to the classroom experience. Group art therapy allows students to safely express confusing and overwhelming feelings while building a sense of cooperation, community, and interpersonal relatedness. For example, students with disruptive behaviors can contain impulses through art therapy activities. Students with self-esteem problems can establish a positive self-concept through the mastery of art skills. The primary goal is always to help each student reach his or her fullest potential. Consultation with parents, teachers, and other specialized instructional support personnel continues throughout the treatment process. School art therapy services have been successfully used to facilitate students' abilities to function as effectively as possible within the academic environment. Providers of art therapy services include credentialed masters or doctoral level art therapists. *For more information contact: Susan Corrigan, American Art Therapy Association (AATA), (703) 548-5866, [scorrigan@arttherapy.org](mailto:scorrigan@arttherapy.org). Visit the AATA website at [www.americanarttherapyassociation.org](http://www.americanarttherapyassociation.org).*

### **School Counselor Services**

School counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling making them uniquely qualified to address all students' academic personal/social and college/career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success. School counselors also assist students and families in the transition to postsecondary education by providing counseling on college admission and financial aid processes. School counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high and high schools; in district supervisory positions; and counselor education positions. School counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student success. Through leadership, advocacy and collaboration, school counselors promote equity and access to rigorous educational experiences for all students. School counselors support a safe learning environment and work to safeguard the human rights of all members of the school community, and address the needs of all students through culturally relevant prevention and intervention programs that are part of a comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors provide services to students, parents/guardians, school staff and the community in the following areas: school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services covering each of three domains: academics, personal/social development and college/career readiness. These services are delivered in whole-class settings, one-on-one counseling sessions as well as small group activities. School counselors develop and implement data/needs-driven, standards-based and research-supported programs, and engage in continuous program evaluation activities. They also create results reports that demonstrate immediate, intermediate, and long-range effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling programs. In addition, they analyze outcome data to guide future action and improve future results for all students. *For more information contact: Amanda Fitzgerald, American School Counselor Association (ASCA), (703) 683-2722, [afitzgerald@schoolcounselor.org](mailto:afitzgerald@schoolcounselor.org); Jessica Eagle, American Counseling Association (ACA), (703)823-9800, [jeagle@counseling.org](mailto:jeagle@counseling.org); Michael Rose, National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), (703)299-6817, [Mrose@nacacnet.org](mailto:Mrose@nacacnet.org); Visit the ASCA website at [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org), the ACA website at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org), and the NACAC website at [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org).*

## **Dance/Movement Therapy Services**

Dance/movement therapy utilizes nonverbal communication, making it an ideal treatment choice for children and adolescents in school settings. Because children and adolescents experience the world through a rapidly changing body, they often communicate their physical, emotional, and cognitive needs on a nonverbal level. As part of an interdisciplinary team, the master's level dance/movement therapist develops appropriate therapeutic goals to support each child's academic success. Common treatment goals include improving impulse control, expressing feelings through positive outlets, increasing self-esteem, and improving body image. To address these goals, a dance/movement therapist uses a variety of techniques within the safe and playful environment of a therapy session. These techniques may include rhythmic dance, role-play, body coordination, symbolic movement, and kinesthetic empathy. Individual and group dance/movement therapy services help students cope with physical impairments, learning disabilities, and behavioral issues that can lead to classroom disruption and create tension within family relationships. The dance/movement therapist collaborates with school staff and parents to transfer therapeutic skills to the classroom and home, in order to improve the child's overall functioning. *For more information contact: Sherry Goodill, [sgoodill@dca.net](mailto:sgoodill@dca.net), or Myrna Mandlawitz, [mandlawitz@verizon.net](mailto:mandlawitz@verizon.net), American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA). Visit the ADTA website at [www.adta.org](http://www.adta.org).*

## **Music Therapy Services**

Music Therapy is an established health profession in which music is used to achieve non-music functional goals. Music therapy can facilitate students' development in cognitive, behavioral, physical, emotional, social, and communication domains. Participation in music therapy can stimulate focus of attention and can serve as a motivation for students to participate more fully in their education. A music therapy assessment conducted by a board certified music therapist provides the IEP team with the information it needs to determine related service eligibility. Music therapy can serve as an integral component in helping the child with special needs attain educational goals identified by his/her IEP team, either through direct or consultant services. One of the purposes of music therapy for students is to provide them with an initial assist using melodic and rhythmic strategies, followed by fading of musical cues to aid in generalization and transfer to other environments. Adapting strategies to encourage a child's participation in the least restrictive environment, music therapists can support special education classroom teachers by providing effective ways to incorporate music into their academic curriculum and make recommendations to families regarding ways to include successful music therapy techniques in other aspects of the child's life. Qualified music therapists holding the Music Therapist-Board Certified (MT-BC) credential have completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral level degree in music therapy, a minimum of 1200 hours of clinical training, and passed the national board certification exam administered by the Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT). *For more information contact: Judy Simpson, American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), (301) 589-3300 x105, [simpson@musictherapy.org](mailto:simpson@musictherapy.org), or Rebecca Smith, AMTA, (301)589-3300 x108, [smithr@musictherapy.org](mailto:smithr@musictherapy.org). Visit the AMTA website at [www.musictherapy.org](http://www.musictherapy.org).*

## School Nurse Services

Registered nurses are dedicated to improving the health and educational success of children and youth. School nurses are responsible for providing health services to students and staff. Specifically, a school nurse provides illness and injury assessments and interventions, chronic disease management, nursing procedures such as gastrostomy tube feedings and tracheotomy care, individualized nursing care plans and services for student with disabilities and/or health conditions that interfere with learning, health assessments for IEP development, screening for health factors impacting student education, assessment and interventions for students with mental health needs, crisis team participation, health curriculum participation, health policy development and serves as a school/community/health care provider liaison. Additionally, the school nurse often serves as the coordinator of other health related services in the school setting such as staff wellness, nutrition issues, health counseling, and healthy environments. *For more information contact: Mary Louise Embrey, National Association of School Nurses (NASN), [membrey@nasn.org](mailto:membrey@nasn.org). Visit the NASN website at [www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org).*

## Occupational Therapy Services

Occupational therapy, or OT, is concerned with helping individuals engage in their everyday activities, or “occupations.” For children, this may include getting dressed, participating in school activities, getting along with their siblings and friends, feeding themselves, and completing written tasks. As a related service under Part B of IDEA and a primary service under Part C, OT is interested in helping children and youth utilize existing skills or develop new ones in order to be successful and independent in school, at home, at work, and in their communities. Through the use of meaningful and purposeful activities, occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants (under the direction and supervision of the occupational therapist), collaborate with other members of the team to identify, modify, design, or implement appropriate strategies and opportunities that lead to accomplishment, mastery, and a sense of purpose in ways that are important and meaningful to the child and their family. *For more information contact: Heather Parsons, American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), (301) 652-2682, [hparsons@aota.org](mailto:hparsons@aota.org); or Sandra Schefkind, [sschefkind@aota.org](mailto:sschefkind@aota.org). Visit the AOTA website at [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org).*

## Physical Therapy Services

Physical therapists provide services in the schools to support the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). Physical therapists assist students in accessing school environments and benefiting from their educational program through the delivery of prevention and treatment of functional impairments and limitations. Physical therapists work collaboratively with other professionals to provide screening, evaluation, program planning and therapy services. As a member of the IEP team, physical therapists design and implement physical therapy interventions and accommodations, which include the teaching and training of educational personnel and family members to assist the student in meeting his or her IEP goals. The physical therapist assistant (PTA), under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist, aids in the delivery of physical therapy interventions. *For more information contact: Monica Herr, American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), (703) 706-3156, [monicaherr@apta.org](mailto:monicaherr@apta.org); or Deborah Crandall, (703)706-3177, [deborahcrandall@apta.org](mailto:deborahcrandall@apta.org). Visit the APTA website at [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org).*

## Psychological Services

Psychological services in schools combine the science and practice of psychology with children, youth, families, learners of all ages, and the education process. Providers of psychological services include masters/specialist and doctoral level school psychologists, as well as doctoral level psychologists such as clinical, developmental, counseling, pediatric, and family psychologists. Psychologists and school psychologists provide a range of psychological assessments, intervention, prevention, crisis response, individual, group, and family counseling, teacher consultation, health promotion, and program development and evaluation services, with a special focus on the developmental processes of children and youth within the context of schools, families, and other systems. School psychologists and psychologists promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for children and their families through research-based, effective programs that prevent unhealthy behaviors, enhance healthy development, and promote optimal learning. *For more information contact: Alexandra Ginsberg, [aginsberg@apa.org](mailto:aginsberg@apa.org), American Psychological Association (APA); or Stacy Skalski, National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), [sskalski@naspweb.org](mailto:sskalski@naspweb.org). Visit the APA website at [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org), and the NASP website at [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org).*

## School Social Work Services

School social workers understand that many students face social, emotional, mental health, learning, cultural, and economic barriers, which must be addressed in order for these students to be successful in school. The student outcomes related to school social work services are increased student achievement, safety, improved mental health, attendance, social-behavioral competency, and family and community involvement. School social workers provide a wide range of services to students, including assessment and screening, individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, family support, linking to community agencies and services, advocacy, and classroom instruction. In addition to serving students with disabilities, other student groups commonly served by school social workers are students experiencing violence and harassment, homeless students, pregnant and parenting students, students who have mental health challenges, truant students, students who are high-risk for dropping out of school, and students who are transitioning between school and treatment programs or the juvenile justice system. School social workers network with community-based organizations to ensure that students and families access needed services. They work closely with teachers and administrators to provide consultation related to behavior and classroom management, mental health, child abuse and neglect, crisis response, truancy, family dynamics, community resources, and other special concerns that impact student learning. Recognizing that many challenges experienced by students are brought into school and are prevalent in the school community, school social workers seek to develop and implement new programs, resources and policies that will maximize students' success in school. *For more information contact: Myrna Mandlawitz, School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA), (202) 686-1637, [mandlawitz@verizon.net](mailto:mandlawitz@verizon.net); Judith Kullas Shine, American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW), [acssw@acssw.org](mailto:acssw@acssw.org); or, Sharon Issurdatt, National Association of Social Workers (NASW), (202)336-8268, [sissurdatt@naswdc.org](mailto:sissurdatt@naswdc.org). Visit the SSWAA website at [www.sswaa.org](http://www.sswaa.org); the ACSSW website at [www.acssw.org](http://www.acssw.org); and the NASW website at [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org).*

## **Speech-Language Pathology Services**

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) work with students with communication disorders including students struggling with language learning and literacy problems to develop and improve their oral communication, reading, and writing skills. SLPs are professionally trained to prevent, screen, consult, evaluate, diagnose, treat, provide intervention for, manage, counsel, and provide follow-up services for persons with or who are at risk for speech, language, cognitive communication, swallowing and related disorders. The school-based SLP is an essential member of the pre-referral, interdisciplinary, IEP, and other educational teams in the school. School-based SLPs provide services for students who have speech and language disorders as their primary disability and also provide related services to students with other disabilities including: specific learning disabilities; developmental disabilities; emotional disturbance; multiple disabilities; hearing; orthopedic, visual or health impairments; autism; deaf-blindness; and traumatic brain injury. SLPs provide services to students in different ways ---to individuals, small groups, and in the classroom setting depending on the needs of the student. They work with teachers, families, and other specialized instructional support personnel to provide the support and expertise needed to help students' achieve academic success and receive the maximum benefit from their educational program. Certified speech-language pathologists hold either a master's degree or a doctoral degree, complete a clinical fellowship year, and take a national examination to earn a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) from the American Speech-Language- Hearing Association (ASHA). *For more information contact Susan Karr, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), (301) 296-5684, [skarr@asha.org](mailto:skarr@asha.org). Visit ASHA's web site at: [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org).*

## **Pupil Services Administrators**

Pupil services administrators advocate success for all students by providing leadership, support, professional development to school administrators responsible for pupil services programs within the context of educational settings. Pupil Services Administrators are committed to developing and implementing public education policy that promotes excellent programs and services essential for student success. *For more information contact: Wayne Fausnaught, National Association of Pupil Services Administrators (NAPSA), (570) 323-2050, [napsa@comcast.net](mailto:napsa@comcast.net). Visit the NAPSA website at [www.napsa.com](http://www.napsa.com).*

**For more information go to: [www.NASISP.org](http://www.NASISP.org) or contact [info@nasisp.org](mailto:info@nasisp.org)**

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