

VOICES



A Publication of the **NJSHA** New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association



Spring
2026

**2026 NJSHA
CONVENTION**

Professional Directory

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ASHA ACE Awards

October - December 2025

During this period, the following current NJSHA members were presented the Award for Continuing Education (ACE) by the ASHA Continuing Education Board. The ACE is a formal recognition of professionals who have demonstrated their commitment to lifelong learning by earning 7.0 CEUs (70 contact hours) within a 36-month period. Congratulations to each of you from NJSHA!

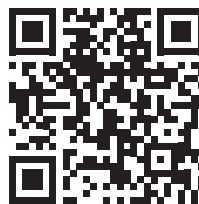
Adi Magid	Kimberly Kerney
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Arlene Hernandez	Luisa Rinaudo
Chelsae Dell Elba	Maggie Banal
Colleen Horan	Mary DeNarie
Diane Semon	Michael Cipolletti
Elaine Hitchcock	Natalie Neubauer
Elisa Schwartz	Natalie Nunez
Erinmarie Ciallella	Olivia Neiman
Holly Pralgever	Sharon Ratiner
Ivelca Rodriguez	Susan Rothschild
Jaime Taylor	Thomas Fahey
Jennifer McIlvaine O’Donnell	George Marge
Jennifer Montes De Oca	Kirsten Pantalena
Jill Sendik	

Milestones

Have a Milestone you would like to submit for the spring issue of *VOICES*?

Email Irene Laki at irene@jaffecom.com by May 10.

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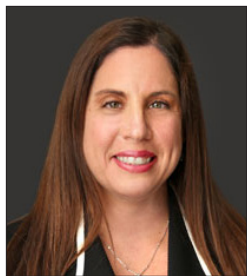
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President's Message

By Natalie Neubauer, EdD, CCC-SLP, President



Natalie Neubauer
EdD, CCC-SLP
President

Stronger Together: A New Chapter of Connection, Innovation, and Opportunity

Celebrating Our Community at Convention 2026

As we look ahead to Convention 2026 on April 16th and 17th, I am filled with excitement and gratitude for the strength, innovation, and dedication of our community. The New Jersey Speech-Language-

Hearing Association continues to evolve in ways that reflect both the excellence of our professions and the voices of our members. This year's convention is not simply a gathering – it is a celebration of who we are and where we are headed together.

Convention 2026 promises two energizing days of learning, connection, and professional growth. We are offering a rich array of continuing education opportunities designed to meet the needs of speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and students across settings. From evidence-based clinical updates to forward-thinking sessions on technology, advocacy, ethics, and leadership, this year's program reflects the depth and diversity of our fields. Whether you are seeking practical strategies you can implement immediately or big-picture conversations that shape the future of practice, there is truly something for everyone.

Expanding Access to Continuing Education

Our commitment to continuing education extends far beyond convention. NJSHA continues to offer monthly webinars and other professional development opportunities, to ensure that high-quality CE opportunities are accessible year-round. I also encourage you to take advantage of the recorded option for the AAC three-class pass – an incredible value that allows you to revisit content, deepen your learning, and engage with material on your own schedule. These offerings are designed to support your professional growth while respecting the realities of your busy lives.

A Fresh New Digital Experience

As we celebrate our educational programming, we are equally proud of the fresh new look and functionality of our website. The redesigned platform offers an interactive, dynamic experience with streamlined navigation and continually updated resources. Members can now access timely advocacy updates, professional tools, event

information, and committee highlights with greater ease than ever before. This is more than a cosmetic change – it reflects our commitment to transparency, accessibility, and responsiveness to member needs.

One of the most exciting additions this year is our fully functional member directory. You can now search for colleagues across the state using a wide range of criteria, making it easier to build professional connections, identify referral sources, locate mentors, and collaborate on shared interests. This tool strengthens our professional network and reinforces what makes NJSHA special: our people.

Investing in the Next Generation

We are also thrilled to introduce our new Discord platform specifically designed for students and early career professionals. This space allows emerging professionals to connect, network, share resources, discuss clinical questions, and engage in professional development conversations in real time. By fostering early connection and collaboration, we are investing in the future of our professions and ensuring that students feel supported, valued, and heard from the very beginning of their journeys.

Strengthening Our Foundation

Behind the scenes, we have experienced a smooth and successful transition to Jaffe Communications as our association management partner. We are confident in the expertise, organization, and strategic guidance they provide. Their support has strengthened our infrastructure, enhanced communication systems, and positioned NJSHA for continued growth and sustainability. This partnership ensures that we can remain focused on what matters most – serving you.

Your Voice Matters

At the heart of everything we do are our members. You are clinicians, educators, researchers, advocates, leaders, and students who elevate the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology every single day. We value you deeply. I invite you to share with us which member benefits you use most and what additional offerings would support you in your work. Your feedback guides our priorities and shapes our future initiatives. Please reach out to us at info@njsha.org – we truly want to hear from you.

As we gather in April, let us celebrate not only the knowledge we gain but also the relationships we strengthen and the shared purpose that unites us. Convention 2026 will be a reflection of our collective commitment to excellence, innovation, and community. I look forward to seeing you there and continuing this exciting next chapter together. ■

2026 Convention

By Catherine Curtis and Lori Watkins, Convention Committee Chairs: Speech-Language Pathology and Marykate Vaughn Convention Committee Chair: Audiology Program



NJSJA is thrilled to host the 2026 Annual Convention at our new location, the APA Hotel in Iselin, NJ! This move offers easy travel and upscale accommodations for our sessions and exhibit hall. Our 2026 SLP programming features highly demanded topics, including Executive Functioning, Artificial Intelligence, AAC, Selective Mutism, and Literacy. Expert-led audiology sessions will focus on autoimmune and sudden hearing loss, diabetes-related impairment, hidden hearing loss, challenging hearing aid

fittings, and more. Whether you are looking to sharpen your diagnostic, assessment, therapy, counseling, or supervision skills, our wide array of sessions will leave you feeling empowered.

Don't miss our featured panel sessions – the ultimate way to hear experts move beyond the “what” and dive into the “how” of our fields’ most complex challenges. This year’s highlights include:

- **Concussion Management:** A multidisciplinary team from RWJBH Health System - Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Center, located at the RWJBarnabas Health Ambulatory Care Center, explores evidence-based protocols and the vital role of the SLP in cognitive communication recovery.
- **Audiology Insights:** A panel of audiologists will present complex clinical cases on some of their most challenging

hearing aid fittings, and we'll also hear from audiologists who have expanded their expertise beyond the clinic by working in non-traditional settings.

- **Private Practice:** Gain an insider perspective on how to successfully launch your business while navigating common pitfalls and create sustainable growth.

Stay Ahead of the Curve: Advocacy & Workplace Updates. In addition to our clinical programming, don't miss our dedicated Update Sessions covering School Affairs, Healthcare/Private Practice/Early Intervention, and Audiology. These sessions are a must-attend for those looking to navigate the shifting regulatory landscape. Our lobbying team will provide essential, up-to-the-minute information on the “hot topics” and legislative changes affecting our profession in New Jersey. Beyond the data, these sessions offer a unique forum to collaborate with colleagues, sharing the successes and challenges unique to your specific workplace setting.

Beyond the sessions, the convention is a time for community. Join us Thursday evening for the Honors and Awards to celebrate esteemed colleagues and the next generation of graduates. On Friday, grab your lunch and head to our second annual Praxis Bowl to watch university students compete for the coveted Golden Brain trophy (and earn ASHA CEUs while you cheer!).

Finally, be sure to explore the exhibit hall to meet our vendors and sponsors. Take your time discovering new products, entering raffles, and (of course) enjoying the snacks and trinkets! ■

Advertiser Profile

The International Council on Development and Learning (ICDL) is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting each person's development to its fullest potential. For more than 35 years, ICDL has been the official home of DIR® and DIRFloortime® (DIR is pronounced D-I-R), a widely recognized developmental framework for supporting learning, communication, and emotional growth.

ICDL provides professional DIRFloortime Certificate courses both live-online and in person around the world. Professionals from more than 150 countries have participated in ICDL trainings, with speech-language pathologists and audiologists representing one of the largest professional groups engaged in this work.

DIR emphasizes that communication develops through the integration of relationships, affect, movement, and individual differences in sensory processing. For speech and

hearing professionals, this developmental perspective offers powerful tools for supporting meaningful communication and engagement, particularly for children with diverse developmental profiles.

Professionals interested in learning more can begin with the introductory DIR 101 course and explore the full DIRFloortime professional certificate program. Please visit www.icdl.com to learn more.



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The New Jersey Hearing Aid Project provides donated hearing aids to those in need.

Donations from this drive directly support hearing aid care kits that accompany those donated devices.

Each care kit includes the supplies pictured, along with an easy-to-follow instructional guide for the user.



Care kits help recipients clean, protect, and maintain their donated devices. Each hearing aid care kit costs \$10, making it easy to provide affordable support to adults and seniors in need.

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This year's 2026 NJSHA Community, Caring, Connect project is Hearing Aid Kits. If you are interested in donating to this project, please donate using the QR code, or stop by the CCC table in the exhibit hall.

Thanks for being a part of this year's CCC project and for paying it forward to help others who are in need!

Multilingualism and Speech-Language Assessment of Multilingual Children

By Siena Sun, PhD, CCC-SLP, Kim Sabourin, SLPD, CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF and Isabelle Barrière, PhD from Saint Elizabeth University

New Jersey is among the most ethnically and linguistically diverse states in the nation. Over one third (34.3%) of the population speak a language other than English at home, according to the latest Census survey (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Nationwide, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that by the 2030s, children growing up with two or more languages will constitute 40% of the school-age population. Speech-language pathologists often bear the responsibility for promoting multilingualism in our communities and advocating for culturally and linguistically appropriate speech-language assessment and intervention for bilingual children.

Two questions that often arise when discussing bilingualism: *How do we define bilingualism?* and *Why do we value it?* Bilingualism is frequently described as proficiency in two languages, but this definition is overly narrow. Rather than being defined by equal skill or fluency, bilingualism reflects the use of two or more different languages used in varying contexts, regardless of the languages' prevalence, or the individual's proficiency level. Exposure to more than one language, even with varying frequency and quantity, qualifies someone as bilingual (Blume et al., 2019, Barrière et al., 2024, Lakshmanan & Barrière, 2025). To understand bilingualism more accurately, we must focus on how language is used and experienced, rather than compare language ability to monolingual norms because a bilingual person does not perform like two monolinguals in one person (Blume et al., 2019, Mishpacha, 2012).

A question regarding bilingualism that often arises from parents: Should children be exposed to more than one language at home? Bilingual parents often worry that using more than one language at home may lead to "confusion" and "delay." Research does not support these concerns and scientific findings have shown that bilingualism not only does not trigger speech or language disorders (Hoff & Core, 2015) but may in fact enhance executive functioning, memory, and cognitive flexibility (Bialystok et al., 2012). Additionally, with respect to social emotional development, transmission of heritage language leads to better relationships with family members (Oh & Fuligni, 2010). In light of this evidence, educators and service providers should confidently encourage children to use their languages as they naturally occur in their daily lives rather than limit language exposure out of concern for development.

How should bilingual children be assessed? Ideally, a language-matched bilingual provider would allow for direct communication with families and the collection of language samples across both languages. However, monolingual SLPs can still deliver high-quality and ethical services by using well-established supports such as adapted parent questionnaires, visual aids, collaboration with professional translators, limiting technical terminology during interviews, and by intentionally learning about the family's linguistic and cultural background. Accurate assessment of bilingual children requires flexibility, cultural humility, and an



understanding that language use varies across contexts and cultures rather than adhering to monolingual norms.

While the use of standardized assessments in both English and the child's other language is recommended (Barrière, 2014), there are only a few well-established standardized assessments for Spanish-English children and comparable tools are far more limited for children who speak other languages. As a result, SLPs must rely on alternative approaches to obtain an accurate picture of a child's language abilities. Narrative assessments, including using the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives (MAIN), and dynamic assessments following the test-teach-retest model, are valuable for evaluating a child's learning potential rather than current knowledge and performance, while also providing an effective means of examining language skills across both languages (Gagarina et al., 2016).

Despite the growing linguistic diversity of the populations we serve, only about 8% of SLPs identify as multilingual, creating a substantial gap between the language needs of clients and the current workforce (ASHA, 2022). Addressing this gap requires intentional efforts to identify the relevant specific languages and cultures of our clients (Ethnologue, APICS, Michaelis et al., 2013) to promote bilingualism in our communities and to actively recruit, support, and retain bilingual clinicians throughout their training and professional development. In New Jersey, Speech-Language Pathology programs with a bilingual emphasis play a critical role in expanding and strengthening the bilingual workforce by empowering and supporting bilingual students to meet the growing needs of linguistically diverse populations across the state. ■

Continued on Page 7

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Member Spotlight

Barbara Schwerin Bohus, MS, CCC-SLP



Barbara Schwerin

Barbara is a highly experienced Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) who holds a masters degree from Boston University and her undergraduate degree from Montclair State College (now University). She currently works per diem for two acute care hospitals, a home health agency, and private practice.

Barbara's distinguished career includes over 30 years of leadership experience as a supervisor at a large New Jersey medical center, overseeing inpatient and outpatient speech pathology services. She led program development, launched a student training program, hired and mentored staff, and collaborated across stroke and geriatric service lines. She established key clinical services, including a dysphagia therapy program and the hospital's Modified Barium Swallow Study program, expanding advanced practice opportunities for speech pathologists. In addition to serving as an adjunct professor teaching about voice disorders, she remains actively engaged in patient care and contributes to community and professional organizations, including the Bergen County Laryngectomy Support Group and the Adler Aphasia Speech Therapy Advisory Board.

Barbara has been a dedicated member of NJSHA since her undergraduate years at Montclair State College. She has held numerous leadership roles, including having the opportunity to serve on NJSHA's Board of Directors and as the Healthcare Committee Chairperson. She continues her current roles as Healthcare Liaison to the Legislative Committee and Chair of the Political Action Committee (PAC).

On a national level, Barbara serves as the SLP State Advocate for Medicare Policy (StAMP) for New Jersey, collaborating with Audiology StAMP representative Maryrose McInerney, Ph.D., CCC-A, DFAAA. Together, they represent New Jersey within ASHA's advocacy networks to address reimbursement and coverage issues, as well as representing the state in matters related to federal Medicare regulations affecting speech-language pathology services. In this role, she monitors proposed and finalized Medicare rules, analyzes their impact on clinical practice and reimbursement, and communicates critical updates to NJSHA leadership and members. She also collaborates with ASHA's national advocacy team and other state advocates to provide feedback on policy proposals and to advance equitable, sustainable Medicare policy for SLPs and the patients they serve.

Barbara also serves as a State Advocate for Reimbursement (STARs), collaborating with Dr. Christina Luna, SLP.D., CCC-SLP, where she serves as New Jersey's ASHA-appointed State Advocate for Reimbursement (STAR), representing NJSHA in state and national reimbursement advocacy efforts. In this role, she monitors and addresses Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance

payment policies, serving as a liaison between ASHA and New Jersey clinicians to promote fair and sustainable reimbursement practices.

In her role as ASHA's SLP State Advocate for Medicare Policy (StAMP), Barbara's advocacy on Capitol Hill and engagement with New Jersey legislators reflect her commitment to shaping federal and state policies that directly affect Medicare coverage, scope of practice, and reimbursement for SLP services. Her leadership in developing the NJSHA White Paper on Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES) further aligns with the StAMP charge by advancing evidence-based practice standards and supporting regulatory change that strengthens patient access and provider autonomy. Together, these efforts demonstrate how she leverages policy advocacy, clinical expertise, and collaboration with ASHA and state regulatory bodies to promote high-quality, accessible dysphagia services within the Medicare framework.

Barbara resides in Park Ridge with her husband and their dog, Colby. She has two adult daughters, both of whom are engaged to be married, with one daughter getting married this summer in Italy. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends.

Barbara sat down with VOICES to discuss her many contributions to NJSHA, her role with ASHA, and how it benefits the profession:

What excites you most about your contributions to your profession?

My greatest contribution is my ability to work with and help people in a field that I have remained passionate about. Working across various healthcare settings as an SLP has been incredibly rewarding. I value the professional network and connections I've built through NJSHA and input from all the people that I have had the opportunity to meet, from managers to peers, and to students alike.

What professional accomplishment are you most excited about?

I felt energized to advocate on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and to engage with New Jersey State legislators. I am also proud of the work completed on the White Paper for Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES) with a team of consummate speech pathologists. This group of SLPs came together as a subcommittee of the NJSHA Health Care Committee. The objective was to have the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, Audiology and SLP Advisory Committee permit trained speech pathologists under specific guidelines to complete the FEES without a physician on the premises. This has been established in all other states that complete this study and has been recognized as a gold standard in dysphagia assessment by the American Speech and Hearing Association.

Why did you join NJSHA?

I joined as a student while at Montclair State as an undergraduate student when I heard about the association. I wanted to be more

involved in my profession, and NJSHA provided that opportunity. It is wonderful to meet professionals in the field who complete various types of work. Each person can be involved with NJSHA as much as they choose over the span of their career.

Barbara's early involvement with NJSHA as an undergraduate student reflects the foundational professional engagement that ultimately supports her effectiveness as ASHA's SLP State Advocate for Medicare Policy (StAMP). Through long-standing participation in the association, she developed a broad understanding of diverse practice settings, reimbursement challenges, and the real-world impact of Medicare policy across the continuum of care. That sustained engagement within NJSHA has strengthened her ability as StAMP to represent the voices of New Jersey SLPs, translate federal Medicare updates into meaningful guidance, and advocate for policies that protect both clinicians and the patients they serve.

What is your advice to other professionals on why they should join NJSHA?

NJSHA is a solid investment as your primary advocate in New Jersey, particularly on critical issues such as state legislation, scope of practice, and reimbursement policies that directly affect every practicing SLP and audiologist. Through collaboration with ASHA and active participation in advocacy networks such as STAR, StAMP, and other state initiatives, NJSHA ensures that our professions remain visible, protected, and appropriately reimbursed. Whether members choose to be highly engaged and involved or simply stay informed, joining NJSHA allows them to take part in advocacy at the level that fits their career stage and availability – while collectively strengthening the voice of our professions and safeguarding patient access to services.

How do you suggest others can get (more) involved in NJSHA?

Visit the NJSHA website to find committees that interest you. I recommend attending an online committee info session or a scheduled committee meeting to listen to and learn about this group within our community. We are a welcoming group and are always happy to chat with prospective members.

Who is your "NJSHA Hero" and why?

I would like to recognize Robynne Kratchman for her exemplary leadership and longstanding service to NJSHA. She has served the Association in numerous capacities and consistently demonstrates professionalism, integrity, and a genuine commitment to supporting members across all practice settings. Her leadership as President during the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic was steady, strategic, and deeply reassuring to the membership.

I have had the privilege of collaborating with her on several committees and have witnessed firsthand her inclusive leadership style. She empowers members to engage at the level that aligns with their interests and capacity, fostering leadership development without micromanagement and creating space for individuals to contribute in ways that reflect their own strengths and professional identities.

Do you have a greatest "NJSHA moment"? If so, what was it?

I received the Volunteer of the Year award in the early 2000s for creating an educational video about insurance coverage issues, which I truly shared with the Healthcare Committee members. A

subcommittee from the Healthcare Committee created a dialogue for a video using children as narrators regarding insurance coverage issues. I then created a video based on the dialogue which was very well received and fun to do.

What is the next challenge you would like to undertake, both professionally and with NJSHA?

My primary focus continues to be my service as New Jersey's ASHA-appointed StAMP and STAR representative, working collaboratively with two outstanding colleagues to advance reimbursement and Medicare policy advocacy for our professions. In addition, I serve as Legislative Liaison to Healthcare, Early Intervention, and Private Practice, where I help monitor and respond to state-level regulatory and policy developments impacting clinicians and the patients we serve. I am also proud to contribute to the Political Action Committee (PAC), supporting efforts to strengthen advocacy initiatives and advance the legislative priorities of speech-language pathology and audiology in New Jersey.

It is important to emphasize that the New Jersey StAMP plays a critical role in monitoring and addressing Medicare reimbursement issues, regulatory updates, and coverage determinations that affect speech-language pathology and audiology services across the full continuum of care – from outpatient rehabilitation and private practice settings to skilled nursing facilities, hospitals, and home health agencies. The StAMP serves as a direct advocate for our state at the federal level, ensuring that the clinical realities and reimbursement concerns of New Jersey providers – and the access needs of our patients – are represented in national Medicare policy discussions.

Maryrose and I participate in a monthly national call led by Sarah Warren, Director of Health Care Policy, Medicare at ASHA, alongside StAMP representatives from across the country. These meetings provide a forum to review proposed and finalized federal regulations, identify emerging national trends, and coordinate advocacy strategies to address policy changes that may impact service delivery and reimbursement. In turn, we are responsible for disseminating timely, accurate information to New Jersey SLPs and audiologists through NJSHA, ensuring that clinicians understand both current requirements and prospective changes that may affect their practice.

For members, this means receiving practical guidance on issues ranging from accurate CPT and diagnostic coding, documentation compliance, and billing procedures, to broader advocacy strategies such as communicating effectively with legislators about reimbursement concerns. Medicare policy frequently sets precedent for Medicaid and private insurers; these developments ultimately influence reimbursement structures and regulatory expectations across all payer sources. Through NJSHA's platform, we are able to translate complex federal policy into actionable information that protects providers, sustains practices, and safeguards patient access to medically necessary services.

If you are experiencing issues with Medicare reimbursement, please reach out to NJSHA via Email: info@njsha.org, at our website: njsha.org/contact-us/, or by phone at **888-906-5742**. We share this data with ASHA to help shape future legislation and support all New Jersey-based audiologists and SLPs. ■

Position Statement for CPT Codes

NJSHA and its Board of Directors have been carefully monitoring the ongoing discussion of the AMA's consideration for revisions to and status of Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) code 92507 since last year. We understand and recognize the significance of any changes to this billing code for speech language pathologists and for the patients we serve, especially those in private practice. Here is what we know, some background information, and what NJSHA is doing and will continue to do to serve our members during this dynamic time.

What You Need to Know Right Now: 92507 remains active and valid.

SLPs should continue reporting CPT code 92507 when billing for individual treatment services related to speech, language, voice, communication, and/or auditory processing disorders. Any changes would take effect January 1, 2027. Because of the potential to have a significant impact on reimbursement (either positively or negatively), clinicians and private practice owners will be uneasy until the outcome of the review is known.

NJSHA is constantly monitoring the situation via ongoing updates through various resources, including its representatives to ASHA's STARs, STAMP, and Council of Ambassadors, as well as the Council of State Association Presidents, and a newly formed collaboration between NJSHA, the Washington Speech-Language Hearing Association, and the American Academy of Private Practice in Speech Pathology and Audiology. Unfortunately, there are very few details that other stakeholders across the country have access to.

Information regarding specific changes that may be circulating is likely to be speculative and potentially inaccurate at this time. Stay informed and avoid misinformation by signing up for **ASHA Headlines**, checking its **advocacy news**, and **coding resources**. NJSHA encourages all members to continue to monitor the updates and reach out to asha.org with specific questions. At this critical time, we must remember to rely on and trust professional guidance rather than questionable news disseminated on social media. Sharing of facts and fostering a unified voice for advocating for our profession and those we serve to protect access and quality of care are critical and at the core of NJSHA's mission.

As of March 02, 2026, What We Do Know

Recently, the AMA has included examination and consideration of 92507 as part of its regular ongoing review of CPT codes, which includes a proposal for revision to this code (**September CPT Editorial Panel meeting agenda** [PDF]; **Learn more** about the CPT code process). Periodic code reviews and revisions are discussed in an ongoing effort to improve the accuracy and specificity of





how services are described across medical professions. Recommendations related to new and revised CPT® codes and existing services identified by the RVS Update Committee (RUC's) Relativity Assessment Workgroup and CMS are available on the [AMA's website](http://ama-assn.org). Due to the confidential nature of active reviews, the outcome of the Editorial Panel's deliberations cannot be shared until the AMA publicly releases them (**confidentiality requirements** [PDF]).

Access to detailed information and updates about proposed changes to 92507 to ASHA and the public is very limited. Again, due to confidentiality requirements associated with the AMA's code process, news/progress cannot be shared by anyone participating in the process, such as ASHA, until the AMA publicly releases it. Therefore, what the changes might be is unknown to anyone outside of the AMA review board. Violating this confidentiality agreement would jeopardize ASHA's professional credibility and result in losing a "seat at the table" to advocate for speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

The public release of the information from AMA is scheduled for the summer of 2026. When released, there

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will be an open period for public review and comment prior to the final schedule release in the fall of 2026. When information regarding the release of information and advocacy opportunities will be shared by NJSHA as soon as they are made public.

ASHA has been notified that a Code Change Application has been submitted for review at the April 30–May 2, 2026, CPT Editorial Panel meeting. The application was submitted by another party and addresses speech-language pathology codes approved for the 2027 CPT code set. If you would like your perspective considered during the Panel’s review, you may participate through the formal process outlined below.

There will be an open period for public review and comment prior to the final schedule release in the fall of 2026. **Registration opens on March 6, 2026**, for individuals and groups who wish to follow specific applications and participate in the review process. The meeting will be conducted from April 30 to May 2 and will be held in a hybrid format. Meeting agenda materials will be posted on the [AMA’s website](#). Participants may submit written comments prior to the meeting and/or provide verbal comments during the meeting. This is the only information we have available at this time, and forward any questions directly to AMA.

What Happens If Code Changes Are Approved?

If the code changes are finalized by the AMA, NJSHA will provide a comprehensive education campaign for SLPs, payers, and the public on the changes. We will also provide access to reliable, clear guidance on how to bill appropriately under any new code structure. Again, due to the confidential nature of active reviews, the outcome of the Editorial Panel’s deliberations cannot be shared until the AMA publicly releases them.

What is NJSHA’s Action Plan?

During this dynamic and consequential time, members can be assured of the following:

- NJSHA is actively monitoring and seeking out the most up-to-date information regarding the proposed changes to 92507
- NJSHA will provide timely updates and shareable information to keep members and the public informed as it becomes available
- NJSHA is continuing to communicate and collaborate with other professional organizations to ensure readiness to advocate and represent our members and those we serve
- NJSHA is looking for opportunities for the association and its members to proactively engage and play a productive role in advocacy and other initiatives

to support the best interests of our members and those we serve NJSHA continues to be committed to protecting the interests of our members and the public we serve. We encourage members to remain engaged and support each other so we can continue representing the collective voice of private practice effectively during this next phase. We want to reassure our members that the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association remains committed to keeping you informed, supported, and connected throughout this process. We understand that uncertainty can create concern, particularly for those in private practice, and we are approaching this moment thoughtfully and collaboratively. As more information becomes available, we will share updates in a timely manner and provide guidance to help you navigate any potential changes with confidence. By staying informed, relying on credible professional resources, and supporting one another, we can move forward together with clarity and professionalism while continuing to prioritize the patients and families we serve.

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The Reevaluation Conundrum

By Sue Goldman, MA, CCC-SLP

Many interpretations, correct and incorrect, exist on reevaluation. Some come from administrators; some from SLSs' or CST members' interpretations of code. Many exist due to what has been told to a team or professional at some point during their employment; sometimes just plain hearsay.

NJSHA has networked with the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE), Office of Special Education (OSE) for three decades in an effort to document the correct interpretation of the regulations, concerning both the original Special Education Code, N.J.A.C. 6:28, and its July 1998 replacement, N.J.A.C. 6A:14. Over the decades, volunteers belonging to the School Affairs Committee (SAC), mostly those retired as of this writing, formulated FAQs based on responses from NJDOE OSE to written queries by NJSHA. On its website, www.njsha.org, NJSHA members may read these FAQs as well as the original NJSHA letters and NJ OSE responses that appear in two letter compilations, also on the website.

It is highly recommended that members read all the FAQs, especially since various Facebook groups now exist where questions are posed and often answered with misinformation. The FAQs can be found at www.njsha.org under the member portal. This article reviews key aspects of the reevaluation process.

Within three years of eligibility date, the case manager must invite the IEP team, which includes the parents, to a meeting to determine whether or not additional information is needed or whether the information available is adequate at the time of the meeting to determine that the student remains eligible for special education and related services. It may be determined that no formal reevaluation is needed and if such notice was provided in writing within the notification/invitation, the team may proceed to the eligibility meeting and IEP meeting.

At that point, the IEP team provides written notice to the parents of the determination that no further data are needed along with the right of the parents to request an assessment. An eligibility meeting and IEP meeting may follow as long as the parents are in agreement. Additional data/information is discussed at the eligibility meeting along with all the information reviewed at the previous meeting. Nothing more would be needed in this case. Parents can always ask to wait 15 days between meetings to consider any options. Keep in mind that at the eligibility meeting, it may be decided that a student should be declassified. Though not required, in my opinion, a formal reevaluation should be completed for declassification, especially in the case of language.

If the IEP team determines that additional data are needed to determine whether the student continues to have a disability, then parents must be provided with written notice of that determination, and the district must obtain parent's signed consent to conduct assessments for reevaluation with an exception in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(a)3. Re-evaluation procedures can be found at N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.8(b). Further information can be found at N.J.A.C. 3.8 (b) 4.

If it is determined that a formal reevaluation is needed, the nature and scope of the re-evaluation must also be decided. Additional information may take the form of standardized testing, functional assessment or other informal measures. If permission was signed for a formal reevaluation for speech-language, the SLS must write up a formal report once the reevaluation is completed. It also is possible that the SLS will be the only person completing a formal reevaluation.

Some confusion tends to occur at this point. Some team members may be unaware that a student does NOT need to meet initial

eligibility standardized testing criteria again. It is not mandatory to use standardized tests at all. Exceptions to this rule include the "aging out of a Preschool Child with a Disability" or if the team is considering changing the classification category. It should be noted that eligibility criteria is NOT restricted to standardized test criteria alone. The components of an initial evaluation may be found at N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4 (f) 1. through 5. Though all of these elements may be considered for a formal reevaluation, not all are required. However, for language cases, administration of one language test is often helpful since language demands change significantly in three years and because an area of language, such as higher-level thinking skills, may not have been tested previously. It is always a good idea to do a functional assessment as well as teacher and parent interviews in a formal reevaluation. A classroom observation by the SLS is also helpful since complexity of academic language increases with each grade level. Though this may seem like a lot of work, it can streamline creation of a new IEP that has effective goals and objectives to facilitate progress.

Another point of contention may be that the report resulting from the reevaluation should cite any diagnosis of an impairment or lack thereof made by the SLS. A diagnosis is a role of the SLS as cited in IDEA, 34CFR §300.34 (c) 15.

Keep in mind that the parents are essential members of the IEP team. As such, they must be invited to the eligibility meeting and must participate in the eligibility decision. Additional confusion has occurred since N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.8 Reevaluation (f) states that when a reevaluation is completed,

1. A copy of the evaluation report(s) and documentation of the eligibility shall be given to the parent at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

Some districts are interpreting that citation to mean that the determination of eligibility should be sent home with the reports before the meeting. It is actually an abbreviation of the citation under N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5 Determination of eligibility for special education and related services,

- (a) A copy of the evaluation report(s) and documentation and information that will be used for a determination of eligibility shall be given to the parent at least 10 calendar days prior to the meeting.

Thus, it means that the information used for determination of eligibility be included, not the determination itself. Keep in mind that since the SLS is the expert in communication, s/he has a significant impact into decisions. There are many aspects to reevaluation and this article has touched upon some important ones but it is best to review the full regulations and the NJSHA and to communicate with NJDOE OSE if in doubt.

Nothing contained in this article should be construed as legal advice or as the formal position of NJSHA. The information contained in this article is informational only and may change without notice at any time. Please consult with an attorney for issues of legal significance.

¹A letter of response from Barbara Gantwerk, past Director of the Office of Special Education Program, s NJ DOE, states "One would expect that the speech-language specialist would have significant input into the discussion, but the decision is reached collaboratively with the IEP team members." Though concerning group, this should be able to be applied to other aspects of evaluation and eligibility. The letter may be found at njsha.org under School Resources, New Jersey Speech-Language Hearing Association School Affairs Steering Committee Index and Compilation of: New Jersey Department of Education Code Clarification Letters and Complaint Investigation Reports Impacting Speech-Language Services in the Schools 1996 to 2004, page 69.

REEVALUATION CHECKLIST FOR SLSS (ESLS and ESERS)

Use this checklist as a practical guide when participating in a student's reevaluation.

1. Review the Timeline

- Confirm that the reevaluation is occurring within three years of the current eligibility date.
- Ensure the IEP team meeting is scheduled, with parents invited

2. Participate in the Reevaluation Planning Meeting

- Review existing data, including:
 - Previous evaluations
 - Current IEP goals and progress
 - Teacher reports
 - Parent input
 - Classroom performance
- Help the team determine:
 - Whether additional data are needed
 - Whether the student can remain eligible without a formal re-evaluation

3. If No Additional Data Are Needed

- Ensure written notice is provided to parents
- Confirm parents are informed of their right to request assessments
- Proceed to the eligibility meeting and IEP meeting if parents agree

4. If Additional Data Are Needed

- Confirm parent consent is obtained before conducting assessments, as required under N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3
- Determine the scope of the reevaluation, which may include some or all of the following:
 - Standardized testing
 - Functional assessment
 - Teacher and parent interviews
 - Classroom observation
 - Informal language measures

5. Conduct the Speech-Language Reevaluation

- Select assessments that address current language functioning and demands
- Consider including:
 - At least one standardized language measure (when appropriate)
 - Functional communication assessment
 - Teacher and parent input
 - Classroom observation

Δ **Remember: Students do not need to meet initial eligibility criteria again to remain eligible.**

6. Write the Reevaluation Report

- Summarize assessment results and functional performance
- Diagnose any speech-language impairment identified

7. Prepare for the Eligibility Meeting

- Ensure evaluation reports and supporting documentation are provided to parents at least 10 days before the meeting, as required under N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.8
- Remember: the information used for the eligibility decision must be provided – not the determination itself, which occurs at the eligibility meeting with parents, who are members of the IEP team, invited

8. Participate in the Eligibility Determination

- Try to attend the IEP team eligibility meeting
- Contribute your expertise regarding the student's communication disorder
- Share your expertise with the team to determine whether the student continues to remain eligible.

Key Reminder for SLSS

Reevaluation focuses on determining whether a student continues to have a disability that affects educational performance and requires special education services. It is not a repetition of the initial evaluation process.

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FAQs of Community Communication Boards

By Quinn Kelly, MS., CCC-SLP, TSSLD, Amber Lieto, MS., CCC-SLP,
Cathy Fredericks, M.A., CCC-SLP - AAC Committee



What Are They and Where Are They Found?

Community Communication Boards (CCBs) are boards featuring pictures and words that empower individuals to communicate on their own terms, offering an accessible and visual way to express thoughts, needs, and ideas. Originally developed for playgrounds, the hope is that with increased awareness, CCBs will continue to grow and find their way into a wide variety of public spaces, including zoos, libraries, pools, beaches, museums, medical offices, hiking areas, shopping centers, amusement parks, and more.

As awareness grows, these boards are transforming everyday community spaces into environments that foster communication, connection, and inclusion for all.

Who Are They for and Why Do They Matter?

CCBs are for everyone. While they are especially valuable for those who are minimally- or non-speaking, they benefit a much broader audience. Communication partners, individuals navigating language barriers, those with temporary communication challenges, and anyone who benefits from visual support can all find CCBs useful, particularly for individuals who may not yet have access to another form of communication support.

By existing within everyday community environments, CCBs bridge communication barriers and raise public awareness of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). They serve as invaluable tools for normalizing communication differences, expanding socialization, and shifting perceptions of what inclusive spaces can look like.

How Are They Used?

When a CCB is installed in a community space, the goal is for it to be actively and joyfully used by everyone, not only those with communication or learning differences. Frequent modeling and everyday use by all community members helps normalize AAC and makes communication more inclusive for everyone.

Ways to engage with a CCB:

- **Point to symbols while you talk.** You don't need to say every word, just highlight the key ones. For example, while asking "Do you want to go on the swing?" point to the symbols for want, go, and swing.
- **Keep it simple.** Focus on key words rather than full sentences. The board is designed to support communication, not complicate it.
- **Have fun!** Communication should be enjoyable and engaging. Play, laughter, and connection are the goals.

When CCBs are installed on playgrounds, games and activities can make the board a natural and exciting part of play. Many familiar favorites can be easily adapted, including "I Spy," "Wonder Ball," and "Charades."

Here are some additional ideas:

- **Word Hunt:** Name a word or symbol and challenge children to find it as quickly as possible, with others looking away until it is their turn.
- **Red Light, Green Light with Numbers:** Use the numbers on the board to play a variation of "Red Light, Green Light." One player points to a number, and the others move that many steps forward. If available, utilize STOP/GO for traditional gameplay.
- **Symbol Telephone:** One student touches a symbol, the next touches that one plus another, building a sequence to see how many symbols the group can remember.
- **Direction and Dice Games:** Have one student give directions or indicate a dice roll using the board while others follow along.
- **Yes/No and Choice Games:** Ask questions answered by pointing to "yes" or "no," or encourage choice-making by pointing to activity icons on the board.
- **Literacy Activities:** For younger children, use the board for letter and number identification, spelling challenges, or phonics activities such as finding the first letter of a word.

These activities make the board a natural and exciting part of play, helping all children become comfortable with AAC in an organic, inclusive setting. For additional resources and access to a variety of printable community communication boards, including those designed for libraries, dental offices, and audiology settings, visit the [NJSa website](https://www.njsa.org) and go to: Public Resources • Communication Boards. ■



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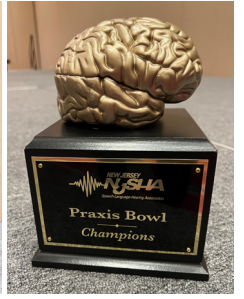
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Student Section

Battle of the Brains: Knowledge Quest Praxis Bowl Returns!

The 2026 NJSHA Convention Knowledge Quest Praxis Bowl is set for Friday, April 17, from 12:15 PM to 1:30 PM. The event is hosted by the Stepping Stones Group. Stop by to watch the students compete and to interact with future colleagues.



Don't Miss It! Student Poster Session – Two Times to Attend!

The Student Poster Session is taking place this Friday, April 17. The session offers two opportunities to view the students' work: the morning session will run from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM, and the afternoon session will be held from 1:45 PM to 2:45 PM. Stop by to support the students and see their latest projects.



Congratulations to Our T-Shirt Design Champions!

NJSHA held its second annual Student T-Shirt contest. Several colleges and universities throughout the state participated. The winner of this year's contest is Seton Hall University NSSLHA student group, for their creative message and design.



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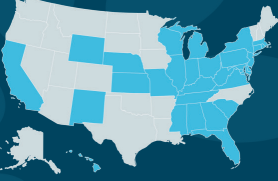


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VOICES is the official newsletter of the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association. The Editorial Board encourages the submission of letters to the editors, feature stories and news reports. Editorial deadlines are February 10, May 10, August 10 and November 10.

Photo submissions are to be 300 dpi and sent as a jpeg to irene@jaffecom.com.

The views expressed in **VOICES** are the opinions of the members or contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of NJSHA. Nothing contained in this newsletter should be construed as legal advice or as the formal position of NJSHA. The information contained is informational only and may change without notice at any time. Please consult with an attorney for issues of legal significance.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS



April 20 • 7:00 - 8:00 pm
CE Committee Meeting

May 11 • 7:00 - 8:00 pm
CE Committee Meeting

May 18 • 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Multicultural Committee Meeting

June 2 • 6:30 - 7:30 pm
School Affairs Committee (SAC) Meeting

Sip & Chat with SAC event

On Saturday, March 21, the SAC Committee hosted a Sip & Chat with SAC event! The committee was thrilled to feature an enlightening presentation on literacy by Dr. Kimberlin, who shared valuable insights and resources to support student learning. Attendees also enjoyed a guided tour of the School Affairs resources available on the newly updated NJSHA website, which is an excellent tool to support your work in schools!



Dr. Kimberlin and Robin Kanis

VOICES Magazine will publish quarterly: **April** (ad deadline Feb 15) **July** (ad deadline May 15) **October** (ad deadline Aug 15) **January** (ad deadline Nov 15). **All ads are full-color.**

VOICES is the official publication of the New Jersey Speech-Language Hearing Association (NJSHA).

NJSHA members are audiologists, speech-language pathologists, speech-language-hearing scientists, students in those fields, and other communication professionals in New Jersey.

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