

The AG Bell Academy for  
Listening and Spoken Language  
**LISTENING AND SPOKEN  
LANGUAGE SPECIALIST (LSLS)  
MENTOR GUIDE**

*Updated June 2022*

*Your guide to support future certified LSL Specialists*

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## Dedication

The AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language dedicates this Mentor Guide to the memory of Karen Rothwell-Vivian, M.S.Ed., M.A., CCC-A, LSLS Cert. AVT (1954–2013), for her commitment and service to the field of listening and spoken language. This handbook will serve as a guide to Listening and Spoken Language Specialists (LSLS®) who mentor and support the next generation of certified LSL Specialists, a fitting tribute to Karen’s tireless work to ensure that families and children receive the best care possible.

## Preface

The purpose of this Mentor Guide is to clarify the roles and procedures involved in the mentoring requirement for certification as a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS®), and to offer support for establishing and maintaining an effective mentoring relationship. Please note that in this Guide, the term “mentor” will apply to the certified LSL Specialist who provides the mentoring services. The phrase “professional seeking certification” denotes the professional that is being mentored. The term “parent” may also refer to caregivers, grandparents, daycare providers, or any person interacting with a child who is receiving services.

Mentoring is an essential aspect of the LSLS certification process. Consequently, this Guide serves as a resource to provide support through the mentoring period. The role of the LSLS mentor, as intended by the AG Bell Academy, is to guide professionals seeking certification in acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective certified LSL Specialist and to prepare them to successfully complete the certification process. The intended outcome of the LSLS certification process is the acquisition of knowledge and skills across all the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) domains, enabling practitioners to implement quality, equitable LSL services with children and families who choose listening and spoken language as all or part of their communication opportunities.

This Guide is intended to support the implementation of essential aspects of structured mentoring, including the specific requirements for LSLS certification, as well as provide resources for best practices in the mentoring process. Becoming familiar with this Guide, as well as the [AG Bell Academy Certification Handbook](#) and [the LSL Registry](#), will serve to guide the mentor and the professional seeking certification as they participate in the mentoring process.

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# I. Listening and Spoken Language Specialist Certification

The AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language (the Academy) is an independently governed, subsidiary corporation of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (AG Bell). Established in 2005, the Academy's primary role is to manage the certification of Listening and Spoken Language Specialists (LSLS®) around the world who work to help children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families develop listening and spoken language.

The Academy envisions a future where all individuals and families will have access to certified Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) professionals in their immediate geographic area who provide linguistically and culturally-competent listening and spoken language services. The Academy's mission is *to advance listening and talking through standards of excellence and international certification of professionals.*

All inquiries regarding LSLS certification and the continuing education program should be directed to Academy staff at [academy@agbell.org](mailto:academy@agbell.org) (English) or [academia@agbell.org](mailto:academia@agbell.org) (Spanish).

## WHAT IS A LISTENING AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE SPECIALIST?

A Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS®) is a professional who has met the eligibility requirements (including passing the LSLS Certification Examination) for the LSLS certification. The certification has two designations: LSLS Certified Auditory-Verbal Therapist (LSLS Cert. AVT®) or LSLS Certified Auditory-Verbal Educator (LSLS Cert. AVEd®). Certified LSL Specialists are professionals committed to providing quality services to families who desire for their child who is deaf or hard of hearing to listen and speak. Certified LSL Specialists have achieved the highest professional standards in the field. LSLS certification signifies that an individual has successfully demonstrated competence in the knowledge and practice skills required to guide a family in the development of listening and spoken language in accordance with the Academy's **Principles of Professional Behavior and Rules of Conduct**.

## AUDITORY-VERBAL THERAPY

Auditory-verbal therapy supports ideal development of spoken language through listening by infants, toddlers, and young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Auditory-verbal therapy promotes early diagnosis, one-on-one therapy, and state-of-the-art audiologic management and technology. Parents and caregivers actively participate in therapy sessions. Through guidance, coaching, and demonstration, parents become the primary facilitators of their child's spoken language development. Ultimately, parents and caregivers gain confidence that their child will have access to a full range of academic, social, and occupational choices. Auditory-verbal therapy must be conducted in adherence to the "**Principles of LSLS Auditory-Verbal Therapy**".

## AUDITORY-VERBAL EDUCATION

Auditory-verbal education supports ideal development of spoken language through listening by infants, toddlers, and young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Auditory-verbal education promotes early diagnosis and state-of-the-art audiologic management and technology. Parents and caregivers are involved to the fullest extent possible in their child's language development and education. Auditory-verbal educators promote mainstream education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing by supporting the development of audition, spoken language and vocabulary, reading, and written expression through school-based learning. Auditory-verbal educators provide parental support, support services to mainstreamed students, and intensive intervention for students who are placed in self-contained

classrooms for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Auditory-verbal education helps parents and students build confidence that they will have access to a full range of academic, social, and occupational choices. Auditory-verbal education must be conducted in adherence to the “[Principles of LSLs Auditory-Verbal Education](#)”.

## II. LSLs Mentors: Qualifications, Role, and Guidance

### QUALIFICATIONS OF MENTORS:

- Each mentor must be a certified LSL Specialist in good standing.
- Each mentor must adhere to, be knowledgeable about, and promote the principles of [Auditory-Verbal Therapy](#) and [Auditory-Verbal Education](#).
- Each mentor is expected to uphold the ethical guidance and principles of their specific licensure or certification.
- Individuals engaging in any aspect of the profession should perform within the scope of their competence, education, and training.

### THE ROLE OF A MENTOR

When a certified LSL Specialist commits to mentoring, they have committed to ensuring that children who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to certified professionals who have the knowledge and skill set necessary to advance the field. The role of the mentor cannot be understated and the AG Bell Academy recognizes that there are many different paths a mentor and a mentee can take; there is no one prescriptive program that every mentor must follow.

Successful mentors have proficient skills in building strong partnerships among colleagues. When a mentee completes the enrollment application in the LSL Registry in an effort to begin the certification process, they must indicate a primary mentor. The mentoring relationship usually takes time to develop and because of this, it is recommended that a mentee work with a primary mentor for the majority of their mentored sessions. However, the Academy also recognizes the value of having other perspectives and engaging with additional mentors. When more than one mentor is involved, a primary mentor must be indicated. The primary mentor is expected to complete at least 8 of the required 20 mentored sessions with their mentee. The Academy recommends that a mentee should have no more than 3 mentors throughout their 20 sessions. Once more than 4 mentors are identified, the mentee will be asked to discuss the multiple changes in mentors with the Academy before proceeding with their mentoring process. The certification process (which includes mentorship) is monitored and tracked in [the LSL Registry](#).

The expectation of the AG Bell Academy is that each mentor works to the best of their ability to:

**Equitably counsel and guide professionals seeking certification** by being knowledgeable about the requirements of the LSLs certification and offering feedback that encourages mentee growth in theory, knowledge, and practice (the application of theory and knowledge). One of the goals of mentoring is to support the mentee in equitable implementation of Auditory-Verbal Therapy or Auditory-Verbal Education with children and families.

**Educate themselves about the topics covered in this Guide**, which include (but are not limited to):

- [Guidance for LSLs Mentors](#)
- [Setting Goals](#)
- [Adult Learning Theory](#)
- [Eligibility requirements](#) found on the Academy website

**Support professionals preparing for LSLS certification** through:

- Completion and discussion of a minimum of 20 **F-1: Mentor's Observation Forms** with their mentee(s).
- Sharing information about the entire scope of practice and principles of all certified LSL Specialists.
- Sharing their own professional experiences with the mentee(s).

**Act as a resource for gaining knowledge relating to the Nine Domains of Knowledge**

### **GUIDANCE OFFERED TO LSLS MENTORS**

1. Maintain LSLS certification at all times while providing mentor services.
2. Maintain confidentiality concerning the work of the professional seeking certification and his/her clients, and ensure safe and secure maintenance of all related records and data.
3. Maintain knowledge of current privacy and confidentiality laws and work within the law.
4. Discuss and come to agreement with the professional seeking certification on issues such as (see **Sample Mentoring Agreement**):
  - The length of the relationship.
  - Frequency and types of meetings.
  - Compensation for services and other activities.
  - How to give each other feedback.
  - Roles of the mentor, the professional seeking certification, and, if applicable, professional seeking certification's supervisor.
  - Confidentiality in both client and mentee matters.
5. Be mindful that the participation of the professional seeking certification is voluntary.
6. Be aware of the **attestations** agreed to and signed by professionals at the time of applying for enrollment into the LSL Registry.
7. Properly cite the work and views of others.
8. Provide the professional seeking certification with constructive and appropriate feedback in accordance with the Academy's application materials.
9. Maintain honesty with the professional seeking certification about how the relationship is working. This includes engaging in difficult yet frank discussions if the mentee is not progressing as expected.
10. Respect and support diversity and promote equal opportunities.
11. Demonstrate respect for other individuals in the profession.
12. Be aware of the potential for conflicts of interest.
13. Collaborate with other LSLS mentors as needed for the benefit of the professional seeking certification and encourage collaboration with additional LSLS professionals throughout the mentorship process.

**Appendix 1: FAQs for Certified LSL Specialist Mentors** provides a summary of questions most often asked of the Academy regarding the mentorship process.

### III. Certification Requirements for Professionals Pursuing LSL Certification

In order to become a certified LSL Specialist, professionals seeking certification must meet several eligibility requirements during a certification process period that takes place over a period of at least three (3) years and not more than five (5) years. Any requests for a lengthened certification process period of more than 5 years due to extenuating circumstances should be made to the Academy at [academy@agbell.org](mailto:academy@agbell.org) (English) or [academia@agbell.org](mailto:academia@agbell.org) (Spanish). Please note that, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree in audiology, speech-language pathology or education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing is required to pursue LSL certification.

Professionals who wish to pursue certification typically find they are more eligible to pursue one designation (AVT or AVEd) over another based on their particular work environment(s). The LSL Cert. AVT designation is usually pursued by professionals who are able to complete the required clock hours providing individual auditory-verbal therapy with children and their parent(s). The LSL Cert. AVEd designation is usually pursued by professionals who are able to complete the required professional experience providing auditory-verbal education services in a group environment in which a parent may or may not be present. Some professionals may work in an environment that lends itself to pursuing either designation. Questions regarding routes to certification should be directed to the Academy at [academy@agbell.org](mailto:academy@agbell.org) (English) or [academia@agbell.org](mailto:academia@agbell.org) (Spanish).

Effective January 2022, professionals who determine they are ready to start the three-to-five-year certification process must first apply for enrollment in the LSL Registry. Professionals engaged in certification or who are preparing to engage in certification are required to enroll, submit information, and submit applications in the Registry. No one can take the LSL certification examination or be approved to be awarded certification without being enrolled in the Registry. Additional information about enrolling in the LSL Registry is available on the AG Bell Academy website: <https://agbellacademy.org/certification/lsl-registry>

**Enrollment Link:** [LSL Registry](#)

Documentation of qualifications and completion of all certification requirements are required to award the LSL Cert. AVEd or the LSL Cert. AVT credential at the end of a professional's certification process. The professional who is interested in enrolling in the LSL Registry and pursuing certification will complete specific eligibility requirements and provide evidence of the completion of each requirement in each of the following areas at various points during the certification process. Ultimately, a professional must complete all of the below requirements before certification is awarded:

- Professional university degree (minimum of bachelor's degree or equivalent)
- Professional credential/licensure
- Continuing education
- Observation of a certified LSL Specialist
- Professional experience providing direct listening and spoken language services
- Mentoring by a certified LSL Specialist
- A formal written description of listening and spoken language practice
- Professional letters of recommendation
- Parent letters of recommendation
- Passing score on the LSL Certification Examination



All professionals must comply with the eligibility requirements for certification as outlined in the [Certification Handbook](#). The most current version of the certification requirements is available on the Academy website.

**Certification Requirements:** <https://agbellacademy.org/certification/become-a-lsl-specialist/>

## MENTORED OBSERVATION DOCUMENTS

DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENTATION
<p>Mentoring by a certified LSL professional for a total of <b>at least</b> 20 sessions (with a minimum of 3 sessions in each year).</p>	<p>Attachment E: <a href="#">Checklist of Mentored Sessions</a> Attachment F1: <a href="#">Mentor’s Observation Form</a></p>
<p>Sessions should be 1 hour in length (or two 30-minute sessions) and include the necessary accompanying documentation (listed in the column to the right).</p> <p>All applicants must complete a self-evaluation for each of the 20 mentored sessions.</p> <p>AVT applicants must include parents or caregivers in all 20 mentored sessions.</p>	<p>Attachment F2: <a href="#">Applicant’s Self-Evaluation</a> for each of the 20 required sessions</p> <p>The following materials are submitted to the mentor (<b>but are not submitted to the Academy</b>) with the accompanying video or prior to observation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case history/present level of skills.</li> <li>• Audiologic information (including speech perception scores).</li> <li>• Diagnostic evaluations of spoken language skills.</li> <li>• Lesson plan including listening and spoken language targets.</li> <li>• Documentation of communication with parents/ caregivers on the carryover of goals and strategies into the home. Applicants are encouraged to include goals for parents as well.</li> </ul>
<p>Professionals seeking certification must observe 10 hours of structured sessions of a certified LSL Specialist. Ideally these sessions are completed within the first year of mentoring.</p> <p>Professionals seeking certification must have at least 3 of the observed sessions be of a certified LSL Specialist using parent coaching strategies while working with an individual child and the child’s parent or caregiver.</p>	<p>Attachment C-2: <a href="#">10 Hours of Structured Observation Log</a></p> <p>Attachment C-3: <a href="#">10 Hours of Live or Recorded Structured Observation Hours Verification Form</a></p>

## IV. Building the Community of Certified LSL Specialists

### A. PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Effective mentors form collaborative partnerships with their mentees. Two elements that foster collaborative partnerships are knowledge of adult learning theory and the use of conversations as a tool for growth. Some information on these two elements is addressed below and the mentor is encouraged to independently explore the areas that are most beneficial for their own personal growth.

#### Adult Learning Theory

Mentors are encouraged to use best practices related to adult learning theory when interacting with their mentees (English, 1999). The following information on how adults learn best may offer beneficial guidance to mentors.

Adults learn best when:

1. They have input into the selection of the content and even the development of the learning experiences (Hord, 2009; Sparks, 2009).
2. The learning is connected to the vast background of knowledge and experience that the adult brings to the table (Burns et al., 2001).
3. The learning is both received and processed in more than one way (Gardner, 1983, 1999; Jensen, 2008, 2009; Tate, 2010, 2011)
4. The learning is collegial (often while engaged collaboratively with peers) and includes participants from other disciplines (Dufour, 1991; Goodland, 1984; Nolly, 2011).
5. They have ample opportunity to reflect on the implementation of the new competencies (Garmston & Wellman, 1999; Mezirow, 1991).
6. Learning is based on the individual needs of the professional seeking certification and their professional development (Morrison et al., 2012).
7. They have opportunities for mutual goal setting, feedback, and time for revisions as necessary (Morrison et al., 2010; 2012).

#### Conversations As a Tool for Facilitating Growth

*“A dialogue or conversation among individuals...must be based on mutual respect, equality, and a willingness to listen and risk one’s prejudices and opinions.”*

—Anita Bernstein, LSLS Cert. AVT, 1983

Conversation is foundational for any relationship, but it is essential for the relationship between the mentor and professional seeking certification. Conversation is how information is transmitted and how thoughts, knowledge, and feelings are shared. It is the most effective tool for establishing and maintaining a strong mentoring partnership. So, as mentors, we need to be sure that we are building our conversations to be respectful and collaborative. This concept is elaborated on by Jim Knight (2015) in his book *Better Conversations: Coaching Ourselves and Each Other to be More Credible, Caring, and Connected*, and key elements for making conversations effective are summarized here as better conversational beliefs and habits:

The 6 Better Conversation Beliefs:

1. I see conversational partners as equals.
2. I want to hear what others have to say.

3. I believe people should have a lot of autonomy.
4. I don't judge others.
5. Conversation should be back and forth.
6. Conversation should be life-giving.

The 10 Better Conversation Habits:

1. Demonstrating empathy.
2. Listening with empathy.
3. Fostering dialogue.
4. Asking better questions.
5. Making emotional connections.
6. Being a witness to the good.
7. Finding common ground.
8. Controlling toxic emotions.
9. Redirecting toxic conversations.
10. Building trust.

Sometimes in a mentoring relationship we can unknowingly create barriers to good conversations. These barriers can reduce the effectiveness of the partnership, reducing the benefits for mentor and mentee.

*“When people position themselves as superior...they create an unequal relationship that inhibits communication and professional learning.”*

—Jim Knight

These 6 responses are identified by Miller and Rollnick (2002) as barriers to a partnership conversation and are best avoided:

1. Arguing for change/persuading.
2. Assuming the expert role.
3. Criticizing, shaming, or blaming.
4. Labeling.
5. Being in a hurry.
6. Claiming preeminence.

And one final comment demonstrating the value of partnership conversations from a mentor who stated that he wanted people to walk away from conversations feeling valued: “...They see me as someone who is coming in as one of them, instead of somebody who is coming in to impart all this knowledge,” (Jim Knight, *Instructional Coaching*, 2007).

## **B. BEGINNING THE MENTORING PARTNERSHIP**

The partnership between a mentor and a professional seeking certification is a critical component in the preparation of future certified LSL Specialists. There are multiple resources available regarding mentoring that address the initial phase of mentoring, some of which are included in the [Resource section of this Guide](#). Two tools are offered here and represent some of the possibilities available for establishing a strong foundation:

Engaging in conversations about shared goals, past experiences, cultural identities, strengths, and needs of each person sets the tone for future discussions. The learning space that is created between a mentor and professional seeking certification is meant to be a safe space where both can grow and feel supported as each tries out new skills. Mentors grow as much as the mentee during each conversation. **What Is Important About Me?** (Appendix 2) provides ideas for these critical opening conversations. Asking specific questions during opening conversations is important in helping participants get to know one another.

### **Appendix 2: What Is Important About Me?**

Quality mentoring begins by collaboratively clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the participants and identifying interactive styles, making sure that expectations are agreeable and clear. Mentors and professionals seeking certification may come to the mentorship experience from a variety of previous roles, such as colleagues, friends, service providers, or clients. Mentors are encouraged to take the time to consider how to manage mentoring relationships and how to address privacy, discretion, respect, and conflicts as your relationships evolve.

A structured and flexible mentoring agreement enables participants to talk about how the mentoring relationship will be carried out, roles and expectations of the mentee and mentor, and how feedback will be given. In addition, the agreement may be useful for identifying possible areas of difficulty so that strategies for preventing challenges can be put into operation. On occasion it may be necessary to transition to a different mentor and the agreement offers an opportunity to plan on how to bring the relationship to a positive closure.

The **Sample Mentoring Agreement** (Appendix 3) can be adjusted for the mentor's setting, but usually would include:

- Frequency of observations, meetings, reviews, etc.
- Protocol of how soon to meet and discuss observations.
- Type of observations that will be done (in person, video, etc.).
- Fees and schedule of payment (if applicable).
- Contact information for both parties.

(VOICE Mentor's guide, 2010).

### **Appendix 3: Sample Mentoring Agreement**

It is essential as part of beginning conversations that the professional seeking certification and mentor review the AG Bell Academy Principles for **both** LSLS Cert. AVT and LSLS Cert. AVEd. These can be found on the Academy's website: <https://agbellacademy.org/certification/principles-of-lsl-specialists>

## **C. CONTINUING THE GROWTH FOR ALL: SETTING GOALS**

LSLS mentoring is a goal-oriented, developmental process. Growth is expected for all involved: the children and families, the mentor, and the mentee. Mentors and professionals seeking certification work together to set goals for attaining knowledge, skills, and coaching abilities in all areas of listening and spoken language. The AG Bell Academy does not monitor nor require any set method of working with mentees and the recommendations below are only suggestions that many mentors have found beneficial when monitoring the growth of their mentees. One of the many ways to set and monitor goals with mentees is to write SMART goals. These goals are typically included in the section of the F-1 **Mentor's Observation Form** titled, "Goals/Recommendations for the next session". Writing SMART

goals is one way to increase the likelihood that change will occur. Both the mentee and the mentor hold accountability for implementation of the goals they have written together. SMART goals help to establish and facilitate good communication between mentors and professionals seeking certification.

**SMART goals are:**

- **Specific:** What exactly is the mentee looking to change for the next session? Clearly define a goal and use action words to write!
- **Measurable:** How will both parties know they have accomplished the goal? What is the criteria? Will this be measured in the number of occurrences of a specific behavior? What results will be seen? Think about how IEP goals are written.
- **Achievable or Attainable:** How confident is the mentee that they can achieve this goal by the next mentored session? Is this goal attainable given the mentees current skills and resources? Does the mentee have the base knowledge to attain this goal?
- **Relevant:** How is this relevant to the goal of becoming a certified LSL Specialist? Does the goal meet a need that the mentee has? Which domain of knowledge does the goal fall under?
- **Time specific:** State when the goal will be met using a time frame or end date.

**SMART goals are written:**

- After both the mentee and mentor have viewed and discussed the session.
- After the coaching conversation has taken place and areas for growth have been identified together. The mentee determines areas of growth to focus on. This discussion is facilitated by the mentor asking open-ended questions to encourage reflection.
- Prior to concluding the coaching session with the mentee.

The following are two examples of SMART goals that could be included in the Goals/Recommendations section of the F-1 Mentor’s Observation Form. The scenarios below include a written summary of the discussion that took place between the mentor and mentee along with the plan for action:

1. *For the next mentored session, you have decided to focus on brainstorming activities for parents to work on with their child in between sessions. You would like to take less of a lead in determining these activities and encourage parents to think of ways to work on specific skills. You will review the guidelines for brainstorming discussed at our last mentored session. Your plan is to brainstorm with Henry’s parents for a trial as you feel most comfortable with them. This session will be on [Add date]. Directly after the session, you will take the time to reflect on how you think the session went by noting what went well and how likely (on a scale of 1-10) it is that the parent will follow through on your decided activities. You will email me your thoughts prior to our next meeting scheduled for [Add date].*

*You have stated that on a scale of 1-10, you feel that this goal is a 10! (Most likely to be accomplished.)*

2. *You have noticed that when you are presenting your lessons to your students, you are interacting most with the child who has the highest language skills. We discussed why this might be and what effect this has on the various students in the group.*

*You have decided for your next mentored session that you want to work on being more ‘equal’ in your time with the students. We discussed how difficult this can be to achieve and came up with the plan that when you are writing your*

lesson plans, you will specifically include separate goals for the child with the lowest language level and also for the child with the highest language level. You have noticed that the children who are in between these levels always seem to either be stretched or meet with success and you are confident you are hitting their targets. You want to focus on how the lowest language level children as well as the highest language level children are hitting their targets.

By [Add date], you will videotape a 30-minute language lesson and review and tally the time spent with the various children in your group to be mindful of having ‘equal-time’ with all. You will contact me to discuss this experiment prior to videotaping your next mentored session, which is intended to show your growth in this area of your practice. Our next mentored session is scheduled for [Add date].

You feel confident that you will be able to complete this work for our next mentored session.

For more information on SMART goals and monitoring growth of mentees in general, a recording of a *Calling All Mentors* call entitled [Creating SMART Goals with the F-1](#) may be of interest.

#### D. PROVIDING FEEDBACK

When feedback is given in a respectful, compassionate manner highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for growth, the person who is receiving the feedback can leave the session feeling empowered. When used as a method of pointing out mistakes, feedback can harm the relationship, deflating or disenfranchising the professional seeking certification. Feedback for the purposes of LSLS certification is given through the use of the [F-1: Mentor’s Observation Form](#).

It is essential to provide feedback in an efficient way that leads to growth and opportunity. Feedback is typically given in a private one-on-one situation or sometimes in a small group if all are agreeable to this. Knowing the types of feedback can help one give and/or receive the feedback in an effective way. Consider three types of feedback when talking with a mentee:

- 1) **Corrective:** Given if the presenter provides information that may not be correct or if something needs to stop.
- 2) **Constructive:** Given to build, expand on, or shape what’s good or shape something that is on its way to being good.
- 3) **Reflective:** Considered the most powerful form of feedback. Here an open-ended question is asked that allows the person to identify their own areas of strengths or areas the mentee has identified for growth.

In a feedback discussion, first try prompting the mentee to state their personal goal(s) for the session. Then ask the mentee to reflect on the session and celebrate any part of that goal that was met. Then (if needed), provide constructive feedback related to the stated goal. Then ask for **two** things (based on the observation form, or personal goals) they liked and **one** thing they noticed they would like to target. After this you can also take the time to point out a list of teaching behaviors you observed that were good, adding in any extra constructive tips where needed that could help the mentee master the teaching behavior.

One tool to consider using when summarizing the feedback session is based off a modified method of Beck, D’Elia & Lemond’s (2014) “Stop, Keep, Start”. Here we modify it by changing the order and refer to it as: **Keep. Drop. Start.**

**Keep:** What can the mentee continue to do to bring forth more of what landed well with the family?

**Drop:** Used only if there is something to correct: What can the mentee try to let go of, do, or say less of that might

help them communicate their message more effectively? Many times, drops will emerge naturally by the mentee when asked to reflect on the session.

**Start:** What can the mentee try differently that may help them lead a more effective session for the child and family?

Additional resources on giving feedback are provided in the [Mentor Resources](#) section of this Guide.

## E. COMPLETING THE F-1: MENTOR'S OBSERVATION FORM

The F-1 form is required to document sessions that the professional seeking certification has completed as part of the requirements for certification and is meant to be a tool for both mentees and mentors. The purpose of the F-1 form is to ensure accountability and to document the mentored sessions. The F-1 form also helps to focus the learning of the mentee and to monitor and track the mentee's growth in LSL competencies.

Related Documents:

- [F-1: Mentor's Observation Form](#)
- [How to Complete the F-1 Form](#)
- [Calling All Mentors video discussion: Using the F-1 Form](#)

One of the critical components of the F-1 is the meeting that **must take place** between the mentee and the mentor to discuss the mentored session. During this discussion, the mentee and mentor together determine goals to set for the mentee, discuss resources the mentor may suggest, build collegiality, share experiences, and uphold the rigor of the certification by preparing professionals seeking certification for independent practice. The F-1 form is meant to drive conversation rather than be a form to be completed.

## F. REVIEWING ATTACHMENT F-2: APPLICANT'S SELF-EVALUATION

For each mentored session, the professional seeking certification is required to complete and submit the [F-2: Applicant's Self-Evaluation Form](#).

Some mentors require the mentee to complete this form prior to their discussion, and some mentors see value in asking the mentee to complete this form after their discussion. This is left to the discretion of the mentor and the learning style of the mentee. It is expected, however, that the mentor reads and reviews the reflection as it is a tremendous learning tool for both the mentee and the mentor.

## V. Equitable Practice

The AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language is dedicated to a renewed interpretation of our core values including a strong commitment to overcoming structural racism and other barriers to equity and inclusion. By creating an environment that is welcoming to individuals of diverse backgrounds and experiences, AG Bell will continue to increase the number of underrepresented community members (gender, racial, and ethnic minorities, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and disabilities, etc.), including professionals, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and families who are seeking access to Listening and Spoken Language.

While having a statement and related policies are important, the role of a mentor may be to help mentees put this policy into practice. So, what is "equitable practice" and why should we care? How do certified LSL Specialist mentors

promote equity in their work with professionals seeking certification? What does this mean for you?

Our work supporting children with hearing loss/hearing differences and their families, as well as mentoring colleagues, is built on the foundation of equity. It is necessary that we center equity in every decision we make and every action we take. As certified LSL Specialists and mentors, it is also our job to lead with equity and model this for others.

***Equity means making sure each and every person has what they uniquely want and need to reach their outcomes, not just giving everyone the same thing. It also means setting aside what we think a child, family, or colleague needs and listening to what they determine are their priorities and strengths.***

In order to listen to understand, we need to do both ***internal work*** and ***together work***.

***Internal work*** means learning about our implicit biases. We each have implicit biases as human beings. Dushaw Hockett shares in his [TedX talk from September 2017](#) that our implicit biases operate on a subconscious level, often run contrary to our consciously stated beliefs and values, and are triggered through rapid and automatic mental associations shaping our behavior. It takes time and hard work to become aware of the biases we each bring to our work and our interactions with each other, and ongoing hard work to change how our biases affect our actions. Surveys, checklists, and implicit bias assessments can be useful tools to interrogate one's own implicit biases. The [Mentor Resources](#) section includes links to some of these tools.

***Together work*** involves relationship building and collaborative action. As certified LSL Specialists and mentors—and as human beings—we can center equity in our work with children, families, and colleagues when we embrace the unique experiences, cultures, traditions, languages, hopes, and strengths that make each of us who we are; when we value and appreciate each other for the wonders we each contribute; and when we act on the collective opportunities the sum of us create. This takes time and intentionality.

“The Academy does not discriminate against any person...”. This means each and every person is welcome, and each and every person has the right to receive high-quality listening and spoken language services that meet their self-determined wants and needs. To ensure this is the current and the future of listening and spoken language across the world, it is our job as certified LSL Specialist mentors—and human beings—to lead with equity in our part of the work and mentorship. Through both the ***internal work*** and the ***together work*** of centering equity, we widen the circle for each and every child, family, and colleague...and for ourselves.

## VI. Special Considerations

### 1. WHEN THE MENTOR AND MENTEE ARE NOT OF THE SAME DESIGNATION

When a certified LSL Specialist is acting as a mentor has a different designation than the professional seeking certification, the mentor may need to seek the input of another certified LSL Specialist of the same designation as the mentee. In this instance, the mentor should collaborate with a certified LSL Specialist of the mentee's intended designation (AVT/AVEd) in order to provide an appropriate mentorship.

It is left to the professional integrity of the mentor to know when they are operating outside their scope of knowledge and to assist the mentee in securing input from another mentor.



## 2. WHEN A SUPERVISOR IS ACTING AS A MENTOR

### Clarification of Policy on Supervisors also serving as Mentors for those seeking LSLS Certification

The role of the certified LSL Specialist mentor is to inform, counsel, and guide professionals seeking certification to position them to be effective LSLS and to prepare them for the certification exam. Professionals seeking certification come from a variety of backgrounds, and foundational skills are likely to differ among professionals at the start of the mentoring process. The intended outcome of the LSLS certification process is mastery across all the LSLS domains of knowledge and skill regardless of the base degree or profession.

Professionals seeking certification are required to seek a certified LSL Specialist mentor in good standing with the Academy and engage in a three-to-five year mentoring relationship. The term “mentoring” lacks an agreed upon definition in literature (Ives, 2008). Rush and Shelden (2011, p.43) refer to the following definition of mentoring by Black, Suarez, and Medina:

*“...a nurturing, complex, long-term, developmental process in which a more skilled and experienced person serves as a role model, teacher, sponsor, and coach who encourages, counsels, befriends a less skilled person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal growth.”*

Literature in the field of mentoring cautions the mentor who also acts as the professional’s supervisor. When a mentor is also the professional’s supervisor, there are both possible beneficial and detrimental effects on the mentoring relationship (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). It is suggested that an effective supervisor should act as an informal mentor (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). However, in many cases in the field of listening and spoken language a supervisor is acting as a formal mentor guiding another professional toward their certification.

### When a mentor is also serving as a workplace supervisor, the following guidelines are recommended:

- The roles of mentor and supervisor should be clearly defined.
- The mentee will be aware of when the mentor is acting as a supervisor.
- The observations that are required for LSLS certification shall not be reflected in the mentee’s performance evaluations as an employee.
- Supervisory meeting times should be kept separate from mentoring sessions (Zachary, 2012)
- When possible, mentees should choose their own mentors and mentors should not be assigned by supervisors in the workplace.

## 3. LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES

The ideal situation is to have a mentor who speaks the same language as the professional seeking certification. At this writing, there are certified professionals in countries all over the world who speak multiple languages. However, it is not always possible to find a mentor who speaks the same language and the mentor’s role is to do whatever is necessary to ensure clear communication. It is up to the mentor and professional seeking certification to decide what communication tools would be useful (interpreter, Google translate, captioning, etc.) and who would cover any cost incurred for this service. A search of mentors by “spoken language used” can be done within the Academy’s [Find a LSLS Directory](#).

## 4. TELEPRACTICE

Telepractice is an acceptable avenue for mentoring. Professionals seeking certification may submit recordings of in-person or teletherapy sessions to fulfill their F-1 Mentored Session requirements. All of the same guidelines for

in-person sessions apply to sessions conducted via teletherapy. Recordings of teletherapy sessions should include a view of the professional, child(ren), and parents/caregivers, as applicable. Teletherapy sessions must include both audio and video of all participants.

A session may be counted as parent participation (toward the 20 required sessions for the AVT designation or the 5 parent-participation sessions required for the AVEEd designation) if a parent/caregiver attends and fully participates via teletherapy. The professional and child may be in the same location (e.g., child and professional at school, parent joins the session via teletherapy) or in different locations (e.g., professional at a clinic serves a child located at a school via teletherapy and the child's caregivers joins via teletherapy from their workplaces).

## VII. Mentor Resources

### BOOKS THAT SUPPORT MENTORING

This is a list of books that professionals in the larger LSLs community have indicated are good resources for developing their knowledge and skills as mentors:

- “Better Conversations” by Jim Knight
- “Coaching Families and Colleagues in Early Childhood” by Barbara Hanft, Dathan Rush & M’Lisa Shelden
- “Coaching with Powerful Interactions” by NAEYC
- “Crucial Conversations” by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler
- “Everyone Communicates, Few Connect” by John C. Maxwell
- “Evocative Coaching” by Bob & Megan Tschannen-Moran
- “Non-Violent Communication” by Marshall B. Rosenberg
- “Starting Strong: A Mentoring Fable” by Lois J. Zachary & Lory A. Fischler
- “The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook” by Dathan Rush & M’Lisa Shelden
- “The Mentor’s Guide” by Lois J. Zachary
- “Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning” by Stephen D. Brookfield
- “Unmistakable Impact” by Jim Knight
- “Helping: How to Offer, Give and Receive Help” by Edgar Schein

### ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

- **The Mentor’s Guide to Auditory-Verbal Competencies** by Cheryl Dickson, Helen Morrison and Mary Boucher Jones
- **VIA Character Strengths Inventory**
- **TedTalk with Dewitt Jones**
- **Certification 101** on the AGBell Academy website may also be beneficial to mentors for review
- For Academy-approved CEUs: <https://agbellacademy.org/continuing-education/earning-ceu-activities/>
- **Calling All Mentors** video call recordings

### ASSESSMENTS RELATED TO IMPLICIT BIAS AND EQUITABLE PRACTICES

- **National Center for Cultural Competence: Self-Assessments**
- **Implicit Association Test** (Project Implicit, Harvard University)
- **Cultural Competence Check-Ins** (ASHA)
  - **Cultural Competence Checklist: Personal Reflection**
  - **Cultural Competence Checklist: Policies & Procedures**

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## Appendices

- Appendix 1. **FAQs for LSLs Mentors**
- Appendix 2. **What Is Important About Me?**
- Appendix 3. **Sample Mentoring Agreement**