

Preface

In the late 1990s, our dear friend, Nancy McKinley, approached us with an idea: a comprehensive text on the delivery of speech-language pathology services in public schools. We were intrigued by this idea, and the result was a book entitled *Making a Difference for America's Children: Speech-Language Pathologists in Public Schools (2001)*. In our first writing endeavor of such magnitude, we found an exciting venue to compile information about the incredibly diverse practice of speech-language pathologists in public schools.

Much has happened since 2001 when the first edition was published. In the preparation of the second edition, we were astonished with the realization of how much has changed in a short six year span. The overhaul to the educational system has been dramatic during this time period, starting at the end of 2001 with the passage of No Child Left Behind. The significant changes in the legislative and research/evidence base of our field has enabled our profession to be responsive, to grow, and to expand.

In this 2008 edition, our purpose is the same as it was in 2001:

The intent of the book is to provide a framework for an expanded working situation and to create a vision of the possibilities for children and professionals within legal guidelines and requirements. Public education, the profession of speech-language pathology, and the students and families we serve are constantly changing (Moore-Brown & Montgomery, 2001, p. xiv).

The educational work setting provides ongoing challenges and opportunities for the speech-language pathologists and audiologists who choose it as their professional home. It is our belief, and our message, that these practitioners not only have unique skills and talents to serve students, but that they also can and should be involved with the reform efforts underway in all schools and districts. As leaders in these efforts, speech-language pathologists and audiologists can influence system improvements and impact the lives of many more children than just those on their immediate caseloads.

We believe that the synergistic collaboration of professionals is critical to professional success and improved student achievement. We also believe that it is vital for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to be in the forefront of school reform efforts, as well as to stay current with the evidence base and changing practices. We believe that how we collectively respond to these critical issues will impact the future of the professions.

The period of time between 2001 and 2008 has been replete with educational issues and reforms at unprecedented rates. As a result of these influences, all educators, including speech-language pathologists and audiologists, are being asked to revamp their practice accordingly. The reader will find discussions of these reforms reflected in this updated text. These include:

- The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001).
- The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004).
- The evolution of evidence-based/scientifically based practice as a standard of care in speech-language pathology, audiology and educational fields.
- The insightful changes brought about by International Classification of Disability (ICD) and International Classification of Functionality (ICF) from the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The overwhelming impact of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) on special education services, specifically speech-language pathology.
- The development of a workload approach (ASHA, 2002a) to better consider and reflect the work demands of speech-language pathologists in public schools.
- The creation of a prereferral prevention-intervention process known as response to intervention (RtI).
- The elimination of the use of the discrepancy model for eligibility determination of specific learning disabilities.
- The inclusion of five areas of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, *[reading]* fluency, vocabulary development, and text comprehension) in two federal laws, NCLB and IDEA 2004.
- Dealing with an increase in the demands for services during a time of persistent personnel vacancies (e.g., shortages) in many parts of the country.
- Evolution of new roles and responsibilities related to school reform issues.

One additional area that we addressed in this text is the work of educational audiologists, who are fewer in number than speech-language pathologists in schools, but nevertheless play a vital role in providing services to children with communication impairments. To the best of our ability, we have featured their work, which we believe is noteworthy and important.

We have been grateful to the many people throughout the country over the course of the past six years who have taken the time to provide us comments and feedback about the first edition of *Mak-*

ing A Difference: Speech-Language Pathologists in Public Schools (2001) as well as the companion *Making a Difference in the Era of Accountability: Update on NCLB and IDEA 2004 (2005)*. Not only is it exciting when someone takes the time to approach you and comment on your work, but we have taken your comments and suggestions to heart and have tried to reflect them in this updated edition. Your enthusiasm for school-based services is what fueled our own excitement about the need for this updated project.

Throughout the text we have attempted, as before, to provide a resource which will be of use to both students and working professionals. The world of schools is exciting and ever changing. The complexity of issues and mandates stimulates and challenges our work daily. We often do not pause to consider how far we have traveled to incur evolution as a discipline, in our practice or as a system. Mostly we contend with the current issue at hand and try to consider how to best deal with that issue. Our intention is that this text can provide perspective on the current issues facing not only school-based speech-language pathologists and audiologists, but the entire educational system. Our belief and premise is that our services exist within a system and are intended to be designed to support the students and the public education system itself. As we have learned from Friedman (2007), what we do in one place has a dramatic impact somewhere else, quite far away. The world—and therefore education—is flat.

We are grateful to again have had the opportunity to work together and honor the work of school-based speech-language pathologists and audiologists. As we often say, the work done by these professionals “knocks our socks off.” We hope that this book will provide information and understanding about where we are heading as an educational system and a profession. We are enthused, inspired, and encouraged by what speech-language pathologists and audiologists do every day, and how they truly make a difference for America’s children.

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

— Marian Wright Edelman