Choosing a new job as a Speech-Language Pathologist can be stressful and full of choices; this guide will help you cover all of your bases.

It IS important that you find out about all of these questions if they are relevant to you, it’s NOT important that you ask them in any particular order.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) What Type of Insurance Does the Employer Offer?

Is it HMO or PPO (what is the difference)? Another important question is when does it start?

As a precaution, most companies require you to work for 60-90 days before your insurance begins.

Does the insurance cover medical, dental, vision, life, disability? Some employers only cover medical and dental.

Lastly, what percent of the monthly premium does the employer cover and what can you expect to pay?

2) Does the Employer Offer CEU $$ and/or Loan Repayment Assistance?

Continuing education is an integral part of a Speech Language Pathologists career. Without them you won’t be able to stay certified, obtain (or maintain) licensure in your State, or legally practice.

Personally, if an employer I was considering working for didn’t offer Continuing Ed. Money I probably wouldn’t go to work for them. That would seem like they didn’t really care about your long term career and overall development.

If you have loans to repay, loan repayment assistance can be a huge factor in choosing an employer.
3) Does the Employer Pay for/Offer License and/or ASHA dues Reimbursement?

On top of continuing education, this is an additional expense you will pay for each year. ASHA dues are $225 a year and most states charge $50-100 per year for State licensure.

If the employer you’re considering offers reimbursement for these yearly dues (I think most do) it is nice to not have to pay for it yourself.

4) What is the Salary Range?

I know, I know, you’re thinking “duh” of course I would ask this question. Just hold your horses...

Some background: I completed a 1 ½ hour phone interview with a hospital that was out of state. I had asked them all the questions in this guide and their answers had been sufficient for my situation.

The HR Director invited me to visit their facility.

I was flown to their facility, rented a car, stayed the weekend in a motel, and was courted by this hospital...

...all at their expense.

I didn’t once ask what the salary range was.

About 2 hours before my plane left for me to return home, I met with the HR Director. We spoke for about 30 minutes and I finally asked “What is the salary range?”

When she told me I did a mental jaw drop. The high range was much less than what I would have made in the city I was currently living in. Needless to say, I felt really bad that I had “wasted” their time and money, not to mention my own...

...all because I hadn’t inquired in the first place. True story.

Understand me when I say, this is not the first thing to ask. Once enough rapport has been established make sure that the company’s salary range and your desired salary range match up. That way you don’t look like all you care about is money, but you don’t waste further time and effort either.
5) How Often Can You Expect a Raise from Your Employer and How Much Will It Be?

If you chose to become a Speech Language Pathologist for the money, I’m afraid...

...you will be slightly disappointed.

However, that doesn’t mean that you’re not worth what you can get.

Our salaries are not that high, but it doesn’t mean you shouldn’t know about when you will get raise(s), and how much they will be.

You work hard, you put in extra hours, you do it for the people you help, but it doesn’t mean you don’t deserve the appreciation of a raise now and again.

6) Does the Employer Offer Paid Time Off (PTO)?

PTO is a huge factor when considering all of your options for working with a specific employer.

Again, an employer that doesn’t offer you paid time off, in my eyes, doesn’t value you as an important employee.

As SLPs we work hard and it is nice to play hooky once and a while...

...and get paid for it.

*NOTE: In some cases this can be offset by other benefits. For example, I once worked for an employer that paid for my housing because I was a traveling therapist.

In that situation the employer was unable to pay me PTO on days when I wanted to skip out. But, they paid my rent every month which was worth more than a few days of PTO a year.

So there is some give and take on this. Just know that it exists.
7) Does the Employer Offer Money to Purchase Therapy Materials?

Now don’t go getting all excited about this. From my experience some companies will offer you a few hundred dollars each year to purchase therapy materials.

I have worked in 2 different companies that gave me $300 a year to buy therapy materials.

Awesome right! Yes indeed...but, the materials weren’t mine to keep after I stopped working for them. So, this can be a nice perk, if the employer let’s you keep the materials, or if you plan on working for that particular company for a while.

8) Does the Employer Have a 401K Program?

Or some type of retirement program? In most cases, an employer will offer a matching 401K program where they will match every dollar (or more) that you put toward your 401K.

This is not really a deal breaker in my book, but something that is nice to know about.

9) If You Are Considering a Traveling Position, What Will the Employer Do For You?

1. Will they pay you any salary, during the down time when you’re traveling to a new location?

2. Will they reimburse you for your mileage/car expenses for traveling to a new location?

3. How much will they pay you for housing in the location(s) you choose?

4. How often will you have to change locations? (Most companies give you the option to stay in a specific position if you like it well enough and don’t want to change)
10) If You Are Considering a Permanent Position vs. a Traveling One, What Will the Employer Do For You?

When considering a more permanent position (one where I wasn’t going to be traveling to different locations every 3 months) I found that every employer does things a little different. In this case it’s up to you to ask the right questions to determine what the best fit is for you.

Questions I asked to determine what the best fit was for me and know what to expect:

1. Does the employer pay for a full day even if all hours are not face to face therapy?
   
   (Some companies do not/cannot pay for any time that is not therapy time i.e. prep. time, evaluation scoring, report writing, and/or daily data tracking)

2. When applicable, is the position I am considering with this employer a 9 month or 12 month position?

   For contracted SLPs who work in a school district, you will get paid a better rate than the district employees but...
   
   ...it will only be for 9 months. Translation: No work or benefits during the summer. Compared to district employees who make a little less, but will have salary and benefits over the summer while they go on vacation to Disneyland.

3. Does the company offer both 9 and 12 month positions?

   It’s nicer to have more flexibility than less. Whether you want to travel or stay put, work 9 months or 12, or have benefits or not will all be up to you.

4. Lastly, if you’re moving to a new area, factor in how much housing costs will be each year.

Every one of these questions is individual to what fits your:

- personality
- personal situation
- likes/desires
- career goals
- passions etc.

Without sounding to selfish or cliché, when choosing your next job it really is...

...all about you.
Should Ask Questions

(11) How Many Employees Does This Company Employ?

Back to what I said earlier, some people like working in a large company/facility/district, while others enjoy working in a more intimate environment where they can get to know their co-workers better.

It is personal preference and something to keep in mind.

(12) What Type of Settings Can I Work in For the Employer?

Of course if you are going to work for a school district, rehabilitation center, hospital, home health care facility, etc. You won’t have an option to change your setting.

Some nationwide companies have positions in every kind of setting you can think of. Thus, if you want to “try” an educational setting and find out it is not for you, you will be able to change to more of a medical setting and still work for the same company.

It is important to remember all of the setting options you have:

- Rehabilitation
- Inpatient/Outpatient/Skilled Nursing Facility
- Home health
- Public/private school

And even further, which population(s) do you want to work with

- Birth to 3 / School-age
- High School
- Geriatrics

If you’re interested in specializing you should also find out if the employer’s facility has these options (voice, cleft palate, feeding clinic, FEES etc.)
What Kind of Support (CF Included) Does the Employer Have?

If you are reading this as a newly graduated SLP looking for your new job, you will **definitely** want your 1st employer to have someone that can supervise you for your Clinical Fellowship Year.

That is kind of a must.

On the other hand if you have already completed your CF year (good for you!) and do not need supervision, you may still want to figure what kind of support system you will have for your new job.

You may ask questions like:

1. Are there other SLPs who I will work with?
2. What how many individuals from other disciplines will I be working with?
3. What kind of team will I be working on (inter-, multi-, or trans-disciplinary)?

**ASK: What Are You Looking for in a Clinician?**

Asking a potential employer this question **scores you points**. It shows that you are interested in becoming the kind of employee they want.

Granted if the answers they give you don’t line up with your goals, don’t pursue that employer.

**ASK: What Attracted You to the Area?**

This question is **only applicable** to you if you are moving to a new city or town that you are unfamiliar with.

It is still good to know what people think and how they answer this question.
(16) **ASK:** What Keeps You in the Area?

Again this is only applicable if you are moving to an unfamiliar place.

(17) **ASK:** In Your Personal Opinion, What Do You Feel is the Biggest Benefit to Working for Your Company?

I always like asking this question because it can usually give you a feel for who you will be working for. If an employer is passionate about what they do, they love living in the area they work in, they want you to be successful, etc.

All of this will shine through when the potential employer answers this question. Typically, this question gives you a snapshot of what to expect from a potential employer.

Don’t be afraid to ask this question.

(18) **Overall Feeling and Thoughts About An Interview?**

After you’ve completed your visit (whether on the phone or in person) you should always ask yourself:

- What are my overall feelings about that visit?
- Were the people I talked to friendly and professional?
- (If in person) Can I see myself working here?
- Was I pressured in any way to make a decision?

In general always remember:

1. **DON’T** ask what they can do for you, tell them what you can do for them (follow the late President Kennedy’s approach)

2. If you don’t know an answer to a question they ask, be honest and say “I don’t know, but I can find out the answer for you.”

   (more on last page)
3. Always **thank them** for their time, considering you for the job, and that (if you’re interested in the job) you look forward to hearing from them.

4. You **should also** send the interviewer a Thank You email, and if you’re really interested and want the job badly, a hand written letter.

**We Hope This Information Will Help You Land the Job You Have Always Wanted**

**Good Luck With Your Interview and If You Haven’t Already...**

...**Check Your Email for the Bonus We Sent to You**