(The Speechie Show Ep.14)

Welcome to the Speechie Show! Being a speech language pathologist often means having too much work and not enough planning time. To beat the overwhelm, we’re bringing you the tricks and tools that will make your job a little bit easier.

**Carrie:** Hey everybody and welcome to the Speechie Show. I'm Carrie Clark and I am here today with Lisa and Sarah from SLP tool kit. How are you guys doing?

**Lisa & Sarah:** Good Hi. Hi Carrie, welcome.

**Carrie:** Welcome to the show. Ok if you guys are new to us, I am Carrie Clark from [speechandlanguagekids.com](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com) and this is The Speechie Show. Every week we talk with a speech language pathologist about some topic of interest and we share a couple points, give you some awesome feedback and information that you can use right away. Then we share our favorite resources and do a giveaway. So, don't forget to hang tight for the giveaway a little later. And today we are talking about progress monitoring. Which is the bane of existence of course school speech language pathologist's.

**Lisa & Sarah:**  It's such a glamorous topic.

**Carrie:** It is. It's so glamorous. So, we're talking today about progress monitoring if you're having trouble keeping up with it. If your report writing is taking forever because your progress monitoring is not, you know really where it needs to be. So, um while we are getting started here and getting some people on, if you are watching with us live, go ahead and type in yes or no to...are you using your time off to write progress notes? Do you have to use your time off for that? Or are you able to do it all during your work hour. So, we want to know kind of where everyone’s at. So, go ahead and type that into the comments. Yes, I am using my time off for report writing or no I am not. And while we are getting some comments in, Lisa and Sarah, why don't you guys introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about SLP tool kit.

**Lisa:** I'm Lisa Kathman and I have been an SLP for about 20 years now which is crazy to me, but love the field so I'm still here.

**Sarah:** She's started when she was 12.

**Carrie:** Haha, yes.

**Sarah:** She was a pioneer in our field. And I'm Sarah Bevier. I've been in the schools for about 8 years now. And solely have only ever worked in the schools. And that's what I love. Elementary is typically where I'm at.

**Carrie:** Wonderful. And tell us a little bit about SLP tool kit. What do you guys have going on over there at [SLPtoolkit.com](https://www.slptoolkit.com/)?

**Sarah:** So this is a web app that we launched about a year ago. It was our baby that we build, um really to solve some problems that we experienced as school based SLP's. And so primarily that was out focus. It would work for anybody who works with the pediatric population. But the idea was that we wanted to find a simpler way to measure progress. So, to make progress reports easier, and also to find a way to be able to collect data effectively when it was time for an annual review. So, that we have enough information on students so that we can be really confident with our data.

**Carrie:** Wonderful. So, you guys have been really diving in deep in the world of progress monitoring and what you can do to improve that over the last year then.

**Lisa:** Yes

**Carrie:** Wonderful. Excellent. So, we have some people chiming in here. Let's see. We got a couple yes's and a couple no's on are you spending your time off writing progress reports. I'm glad that there are some people that aren't...hahaha.

**Sarah:** We are too.

**Carrie:** But, I know that there's a lot of you out there that are. Plus, even if you're not using your time off, I know that those progress notes can really take up a lot of your work time as well. Ok so we're going to go ahead and talk today about 5 tips that will help make your progress monitoring easier. And we're going to take questions as we go along, so if you have any questions, go ahead and type those in. And don't forget to like and share this on your own Facebook timeline and that will help us spread the word further and help more people with their progress monitoring. Ok so the first point we are going to talk about today is using criterion referenced tests to make your progress monitoring easier. Why don't you guys talk to us a little bit about what that looks like.

**Lisa:** So a criterion reference test, if you're not familiar with what that is, it's just a test where you set the criteria for what you want the student to master by the end of the IEP year. So, you develop the test. You determine what you want the student to master. Maybe eight out of ten items or score 80% on that test and you are determining all of the criteria. So, the student is not measured against peers, they're really measured against them self. You get a baseline on that test and then you want them to move to a certain point by the end of the year. And what's so nice about using criterion referenced tests for progress monitoring, is it's a really efficient way to do your progress reports. Because where I think a lot of people run into trouble is when they go to look at their data, they are pulling out files and realize, oh crap, I don't have the data that I need to write these reports. And so, they start scrambling and pulling students in. So, they are using time that they would have used to write the reports and analyze date to pull students in and get even more data. And it's not that they’re not taking data in sessions, it's just usually when we write our goals, we're writing it what we want them to measure in one year. And so, you are still working on skills with students that are those underlying skills that will get them there in a year, but your data doesn't always align perfectly with how you wrote the goal for one year. So, when you're giving a test, you are able to pull that out for your baseline and then just pull out that same test at each grading period and it's a really efficient way to get the data that you need and get a score. And it makes sense for the student and makes sense for the parents and definitely makes sense for your practice as an SLP of doing it very streamlined.

**Sarah:** Yeah and I think that we kind of joke that when we first looked at this idea of using criterion referenced tests, is we wanted to be able to do this like a teacher. I was always so envious of these teachers when it was due time for progress reports and they'd have their tests, their comprehension tests and their math tests lined up ready to go. Give that test and then they've got their data. And so, we have had criterion reference tests for articulation because that's a concrete skill. It's easy to have your ten items and access the student for looking to see their progress on those items and we thought why can’t we do this for language. And so, for the concrete skills, these tests are a great way to be able to monitor progress.

**Lisa:** Just the importance thing is though that you never want to teach the test that...ultimately what you are doing is seeing if the students can apply the strategies that you are teaching them in your therapy secessions, to the test that you're giving them. So, you're not teaching them the test. Just like any other test that you would give in any other kind of educational environment. You're just hoping that what you're teaching them will apply and you do see a slow progression over time as the IEP duration progresses.

**Carrie:** I really like that idea. I think that is really fantastic. Can you guys give us an example of some items that might be on one of these criterion reference tests for a specific skill? Just so that people have kind of a concrete example of this.

**Sarah:** Yeah and again these are definitely the ones that you want to do those concrete skills. So, those things that you can do the plus and minus for. So, antonyms are a great one. Categorization is an excellent one. Multiple meaning words. And so, what we did when we built our criterion reference test is we wanted to come up with ten, a list of ten, because you're typically going to want to see 80% accuracy. But consider that a mastery. And so, we came up with our list of ten items, so say ten antonyms for example. But the main thing that we really wanted to make sure that we did is that we leveled the vocabulary. Often times I think we would use a list of ten words, say to collect data on antonyms, but they're all over the place. So, you might have what's the opposite of up and then you might have what's the opposite of protogenos.

**Carrie:** Yeah.

**Sarah**: And so quickly, your data would be very skewed just solely based on the vocabulary. And so, that's one thing. If you are going to build a criterion reference test, you are definitely going to want to take into consideration vocabulary and the difficulty at the stimulus items.

**Carrie:** Ok. So, like let's say you have an antonym kiddo and you say, my... you’re going to write your goal for the student will get eight out of ten antonyms on this criterion reference test. And you take your data at the beginning and you say ok he has two out of ten and then you take it at the end of the IEP cycle. They have eight out of ten. You can mark that progress. Is that how that looks?

**Lisa:** Yes

**Sarah:** Yeah, and I would actually do them every grading period. And so, that's what I would use solely when I am reporting progress on progress reports. And so, I'm going to give it for my baseline and then when he's due for his next progress report, I'm going to give that same test again.

**Carrie:** Uh huh.

**Sarah:** Typically in our district, we do four within an annual time. I know some districts do six. And so, you are using that same test because again like Lisa said, you're not going to teach those items. You are just going to be using those as your test items.

**Carrie:** Ok

**Lisa:** Just for purposes of reporting progress. You're still collecting your daily data in your therapy sessions to drive your treatment decisions and you can still use that information on your progress reports as anecdotal information in your comment section. If you have a student that you want just provide more information that maybe they made just a little bit of growth in this context but that you've seen some other growth in other context in the therapy room that you wanted to note on the progress report.

**Carrie:** Perfect. And then do you guys attach that to the IEP's so that if that student moves they have the other speech language pathologist can use it?

**Sarah:** Yes, definitely. If you write that you are measuring progress using a criterion reference test. You are definitely going to want to make sure that that test is attached to the IEP.

**Carrie:** Perfect, awesome. Ok if you guys have any questions on that, go ahead and type those in and we will answer those as we go along. So, that's our first tip. Easy way to track progress is to use criterion reference test. The next one would be to use rubrics, which is similar concept where it's a different way of collection data, but it makes it a lot simpler and kind of less heavy. So, talk to us about rubrics and how you use those for tracking progress.

**Lisa:** So rubrics would be for those skills that aren't as concrete. So, when you have a goal that is...the first one that jumps to mind are the goals that you write for social skills that I use to avoid writing because I didn't want to measure them. They are more than just a plus and a minus. And you do look at things that are beyond just, can the student do it or not. You are thinking of things like do they need more queuing or can they only do it in this type of setting, or where are they in the continuum of learning that skill. And that's what's really nice about a rubric is that you can really capture all of that information by assigning points to all of those different levels. And so, you use that same sort of idea that we shared with the criterion reference test that you get number of points as the baseline and you determine how many points on that rubric you want the student to master by the end of the IEP. And at each grading period, you determine where the student is on the rubric. And I think the number one thing that you need to make sure that you share with your teams and with the teachers and the parents is that the rubric score is not a ratio. So, I think sometimes when teens look at 12/16 they're thinking will automatically convert that to 75% in their brain. Did I do that correctly? Is my brain working?

**Sarah:** I don't know I'm the worst person at math.

**Carrie:** Hahaha, I don't math.

**Lisa:** Eight out of sixteen, 50% so but it's just natural for our brains to look at that as a ratio. So, it's really not though. Those are assigned point on where they're at on the rubric. And just like with the criterion reference test, and I think even more importantly with that rubric, it has to be attached to the IEP. And in fact, on our rubrics that we have in our...we actually have that on the wording of the rubric. It's in big bold letters on the bottom, attach this rubric to the IEP.

**Carrie:** Perfect. Ok give us an example of what that might look like for a specific skill.

**Sarah:** So I always think a pretty typical one would be something like topic maintenance. And so, the first part of the rubric would be how often do they do it. So, that is going to be your quantitative data. And so, we still have that piece because like Lisa had said before, we're still collecting data during our sessions. And so, we have that information, hopefully, that says how often they are able to do that skill. And then the next piece is going to be where we task analyze what does it look like? What would be that lowest thing that we see so often with these kids that we see that struggle with topic maintenance. All the way up to the ultimate goal. Which is that they can maintain a topic similar to their typical peers. And so, then each step in between is going to be kind of that progression of what we would see over time. And then the next area on the rubric is typically setting. I'm sorry, prompting, right?

**Lisa:** Yes

**Sarah:** What level of prompting is required. So again, the progression of the queuing. And the next thing would be what setting you're going to see them. So, it might start off that they can only do it in the speech room. All the way up to they can do it in multiple settings. And so, the nice thing about the rubric like Lisa said, is that it gives you a lot of information. More so than just they did it 3/5 times. You can see that you've got the queuing and the setting and again some scripted data too on how they're performing.

**Carrie:** Ok, so you're going to have...for that you would have like multiple let's say 1-5 for each of those different topics that you just talked about. So maybe the top let's say, oh I'm sorry, I just got lost. So, like for queuing you would have like a one would be like they needed maximal queuing. A five would be they did it independently.

**Sarah:** Yes

**Carrie:** Or like the actual skill. So, you would be talking about the one would be they were able to say one sentence about that topic and then they lost it. And a five would be they were able to do it you know ten sentences or you know stay on topic for a certain amount of time. And then you would have a gradation in the middle. Is that correct?

**Sarah:** Yep. And so typically I'd say the majority of our rubrics are usually 16/16 would be you know the ultimate score you could receive on that...I think most of them are 16 point rubrics. But that's not always the case. Some can change and so I think I like the flexibility of being able to figure out exactly like I said, that progression and task analyzing. Breaking down that skill and what we hope to see as they make progress.

**Carrie:** Wonderful, excellent. Ok so we have talked today about criterion reference tests and rubrics. If you have any questions on those, go ahead and type those in. And don't forget to hang tight because we are going to be doing giveaways here in just a few minutes. Ok so the next one is digitized materials. Talk to us about that and how that can help with progress monitoring.

**Sarah:** Well I think one of our, the main...we had a couple of main things that were just absolutes for this when we decided to build SLP tool kit and I think the main one being that it was digital. We have enough paperwork in our lives and we didn't need anymore. And so, we would find that what often happens is you get to the progress report time and you've got to go scramble to find a copy. Or you've got to go scramble to find the materials. And then worst case scenario, you're on a different campus and you didn't bring anything with you. Um and so if possible you want to find resources that are available online. So, what we'll tell people is their going to build their own references tests or rubrics, do it in google drive. Or do it somewhere where they can access it anywhere so that they have it available to them. And that you're not printing more paper that you might accidently misplace or not have with you when you need it.

**Lisa:** And if we are looking at just a sheer ability to save time, was one of the things too. I've used criterion reference tests in the past even for as part of my parkers monitoring process but if you have 60 kids on your case load, the sheer act of pulling up 60 files, opening them up, if even the materials are there to take out. You take them out. You line them up. You have the kids there. You have to score everything. You then have to put it in the system and then you have to refile everything. It's just...you know all of that takes time. And time is so precious in the school setting. So, it was from a practical stand point from wanting to digitalize materials, but also just from a time saving perspective, that we need to find our little slivers of time where ever we can.

**Carrie:** Absolutely, I totally agree. Alright, Kristen is on here, hey Kristen.

**Sarah:** Hi Kristen.

**Carrie:** She says she just got here but she loves the fluency rubric on SLP tool kit. Excellent.

**Sarah:** Yeah, I like that one too. You can get a lot of information. That on is kind of a different one then what we've just talked about too because it's got several different areas on it. It's not just giving you...you know I think a lot of the times with the goal for fluency we might say something like you will be fluent 90% of the time. And this does more than that. It gives you more descriptive information than just a number.

**Carrie:** That's great. I always get questions about how to write goals for fluency. How to track progress, because that one is just so vague and so out there. So, I'm sure that fluency rubric is very popular on your site. Alright so, we are talking about progress monitoring. We talked about using digitized materials so that you are not constantly searching for that piece of paper that you lost. So, that's a great tip for that. The next one is using organized printable data sheets. So, talk about what that looks like.

**Sarah:** And so like we had talked about before, and people have asked us about this who have used SLP tool kit, is, is there a way in the system to collect daily data. And there isn't right now for a couple of different reasons. One, we really were solely looking for an effective way to progress monitor. And so again that's what those CRT's and rubrics that are built into SLP tool kit, help you to do is to measure progress for reporting on progress reports. When it came to tracking daily data, we know that people have their own systems that work for them. We know that people have to use Medicaid software that's aligned with their district. And so there was a lot of other factors involved where we never wanted to create something that was redundant. Where you put information into our system and then you have to go around and turn it in and put it into let's say a Medicaid software system. And so, that was kind of the one thing. The other thing is that it can kind of be complicated to take data online or digitally on a computer while you're trying to maintain engagement. And so, for daily data we do, that's the one piece of paper I allow, myself. I do print my data sheets out because I do like to write my notes while I have the kids. You know we're working on some things. It's definitely going to happen you know that we can hopefully make it digital soon but we're not going to do it until we can do it really well. Where you can get a lot of information and still maintain engagement with your students. But you do have to take daily data and so we always make that point. That the progress monitoring tools are great for reporting progress on reports, but you still need to take that daily data for guiding therapy and treatment as well as for reporting for billing. For Medicaid billing. And so, you want to have a sheet that makes it easy. And so, we have out data sheets. The very top of it has all the goals listed for that student and so you can have that accessible to you by just clicking print. I think before...do you want to talk about the excel spreadsheets that you use to do?

**Lisa:** Well I would have, I use to do my sheets at the beginning of the year and they'd always be beautiful. But then after about a month when I would start getting slammed with just the "Hello school year" and the data sheets were the last thing on my priority list. But there still something that we have to have and it's nice to have a nice clean practical data sheet. And I would always see it and I have scribbles on it and it would always bother me and I would eventually have to update it. But it was just one of those things that it was on my to-do list but it was always the very last thing to do. So, I love, that's one of the features we have built in that to me is one of those just real practical time saving features that there’s a way to develop goals in the system that you can transfer into your IEP software. And if you're developing your goals within our system, you just hit a print button and your data sheets are always current. That's all you have to do is hit print. You never have to update anything. So, we always look at ways to what is something that I'm already doing that can then carry over into other systems so I don't have to do it multiple times and multiple ways.

**Carrie:** That totally resonates with me. If you guys are on here live, have any of you had that effect where you get it all organized at the beginning of the year and then two months later it just falls apart? Type in yes if you have also done that because I know I have! Wonderful. Ok so we are talking about progress monitoring. Let’s talk about co-creating data sheets with others. How does that look when you are using a team approach?

**Lisa:** So I think especially with a lot of our students that are working in classrooms that are self-contained, or if you are working on some of those social skills that are um goals that are more, not as concrete. Like we have our speech and language data sheets that are good to go and that we are just collecting data on, but if you are working with a student and it’s a team based kind of goal that is something that you really do want to get information throughout the week. How that student's functioning. Use your team. We always talk about we are not an island. That's the best part about working in a school setting, it's not all on our shoulders. We have teachers. We have instructional assistants or peer professionals, whatever you call them in your part of the country, but we have these professionals that are all working toward that same goal which is the students access to curriculum. And so, when you are doing something like making data sheets if you can at the beginning of the year when you still have that energy, and are making these great data sheets, get together with your teachers and talk about how that can look. Because if you can leave some of those data sheets in the classroom and get some training done early on in the year with the instructional assistants and the teacher to get some information for you of how the students doing in the classroom, it gives you a more well-rounded idea of how the student is doing. Whether you are going into the classroom to provide those services or not, you know that when you are looking at something that data is consistent and it really helps with programing decisions moving forward as well.

**Carrie:** Absolutely.

**Lisa:**  And you have kind of that common language I think too than working with a team.

**Carrie:** Yeah. Well and I think a lot of the time those other teachers or professionals or whoever is in there, they want to participate and they want to be part of that child’s progress and you know all of the things that are going on and they don't necessarily know how. So, giving them a very simple rubric where they just circle the number for that day. Or a criterion reference test where they just check some things off. You know that can really be helpful to get kind of a team buy in.

**Sarah:** That's exactly right. And everybody is on the same page. And like Lisa pointed out, I think the main thing is that they see that kid more than we do. And so, they definitely have access to that student more frequently and in a more authentic situation and setting. And so, we should be including them in our data collection.

**Carrie:** Yeah. There's nothing worse that you get to an IEP meeting and you say this child can do this with 80% accuracy and the teacher goes, "He never does that". Hahaha.

**Sarah:** Exactly.

**Carrie:** You're like Ahh.

**Lisa:** So the rubrics I think are really great to share because that is capturing the student over multiple settings and you can see that skill progression. The criterion reference test I think can be more difficult because we do want to just pull them out at the time of progress report time. So, that that's something we may want to keep in our own wheel house. But our daily data collection sheet that we would use I think it's real helpful for them to just see the goals every day.

**Carrie:** Yep

**Lisa:** So they have that reminder of what is the skill that they're working on and then even incorporating in some ways that they could even you know some times I've used even a like a time grid. You know when can they work on these goals throughout the day. When are some times that it makes sense to incorporate these skills throughout the students scheduled day?

**Carrie:** That's wonderful, yeah. Well it sounds like you guys have a lot of really awesome resources over there. So, we're going to go ahead and do our giveaways now for those of you who are watching live. And the first giveaway today is the SLP tool kit membership. So why don't you guys talk about SLP took kit and what our winner is going to get today.

**Sarah:** So at our web, it's a web application and so you actually go to [slptoolkit.com](https://www.slptoolkit.com/) on any web enabled device. So, it's got a web app that you download. And you do pay a membership fee to access the app. And that gives you access to all of our features. So, the nice thing is, is all of your data is saved into this system and accessible anywhere, on an iPad or on a computer. And so, you'll have access to all of our built-in criterion reference tests. And we have a comprehensive library. We try to do a good job in incorporating test in all areas and we always add to that. And then there is also some informal screening measures that are great for collecting data for annual reviews. And then there is a really awesome goal bank and some really good strategies. So, with this you're going to get access to three months which will take you till the end of the school year. So, that's pretty cool.

**Carrie:** Perfect. And there's rubrics in there too?

**Sarah:** Yep. Built in rubrics.

**Carrie:** Excellent. Alright so the first person to win today is going to get three free months in SLP tool kit. The second person to win today is going to win two free months in my membership which is the speech therapy solution. If you're not familiar with that, that is my membership site for speech language pathologists. We have monthly webinars, training videos, printable materials ready to go, help with lesson planning, all kinds of good benefits. Plus, you can ask questions and get answers if you're stuck with a kid. So, we have lots of resources in there and you can find that at [speechandlanguagekids.com/join](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/). But we're going to go ahead and do the giveaway now. So, I'm going to ask a question. The first two people to respond are going to win. The first person to respond on Facebook live right here right now is going to get the three free months in the SLP tool kit. The second person will get the two free months in the speech therapy solution. So here we go. The question is what type of goals do you use rubrics for? Or if you are not currently using them, what would you use rubrics for? So, what types of goals are good for rubrics? First two people to respond are going to win. Ok so while we are waiting on those answers to come in, we hope that that was helpful for you today. We hope you learned some things that will help you make your progress monitoring just a little bit easier. Oh, we have a winner. Heather Kelly McKay says social and Kristine also says social. Yep social is huge for rubric. Ok so Heather is going to win the SLP tool kit. How do you guys want her to contact you or will you guys contact her?

**Lisa:** If you could just email us Heather at hello@slptoolkit.com. We will send you a code that you can use to access your subscription.

**Carrie:** Perfect. And Kristine you won the two months in my membership, congratulations. And you can get that by emailing me at carrie@speechandlanguagekids.com. Alright we have some other people saying social fluency. All kinds of good answers. Alright thank you guys so much for joining us today and thank you Sarah and Lisa for joining us and talking about progress monitoring.

**Sarah:** Yeah it was my pleasure, thank you for having us.

**Lisa:** Yes thanks

**Carrie:** Absolutely. Can you tell people really quick before we go where can they find more information about you and check out SLP took kit? Where should they go?

**Sarah:** Yeah so, our website is <https://www.slptoolkit.com/>. And you can sign up for a free trial and use it for as long as you want for up to five students. So, it's an awesome way to be able to access the content and check it out to see if it helps you. You don't have access to all the features a subscribed member has, but again it gives you plenty of time to look and see what it is that we offer. And then we blog at blog.slptoolkit.com and that's where we talk about all school based issues.

**Carrie:** Perfect.

**Lisa:** You can also find us on Facebook and Instagram and it's just /slptoolkit.

**Carrie:** Excellent, wonderful. And if you want more information about the speech therapy solution, you can head over to [speechandlanguagekids.com/join](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/) and learn about all of the benefits there. Alright thank you guys so much for joining us today and we'll see you next week on the Speechie Show. Bye for now.

Thank you for joining us today on The Speech Show. We hope today’s tips have helped you feel a little less stressed and a little more confident about your work. If you’re looking for more stress busters and confidence boosters, we’d love to have you join us in The Speech Therapy Solution, where you’ll get access to a huge library of premium training videos and another library of print and go therapy materials. You can also get help with your tough cases by Carrie on the weekly Q&A calls, or by posting in the exclusive Facebook group. Plus, group members can join us for a monthly webinar that can be used for a continuing education credit. Head on over to SpeechandLanguageKids.com/join to check out all the amazing benefits of the speech therapy solution membership. Bye for now.