

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REPORT WRITING
(from Treatment Resource Manual for Speech-Language Pathology)

- ❑ Avoid writing clinical reports in a conversational style (e.g., “He just didn’t get the point” versus “He did not appear to understand the task”).
- ❑ Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation and write in complete sentences.
- ❑ Write in the third person (e.g., “The *Token Test* was administered” rather than “I administered the *Token Test*”).
- ❑ Avoid use of contracted verb forms (e.g., isn’t, can’t, I’ve).
- ❑ Give the full names of tests when first mentioned before using acronyms and other abbreviations in the remainder of the report.
- ❑ Express information in behavioral terms (e.g., “followed two-step commands” versus “is able to follow two-step commands”).
- ❑ Present information (particularly case history) in chronological sequence.
- ❑ Differentiate clearly between information reported by others versus information obtained directly through clinician observation.
- ❑ List all data such as test scores or baseline measures before providing any interpretative statements. This approach facilitates interpretation of a client’s overall profile rather than presenting unrelated descriptions of isolated communication skills.
- ❑ Include information about a client’s strengths as well as weaknesses in the body of the report.
- ❑ Avoid presenting information in the summary section of any report that was not introduced previously in the body of the report.
- ❑ Write reports to communicate with colleagues using professional terminology, but include simple explanations and clear examples to make reports meaningful to family members and other nonprofessionals.
- ❑ Use language that is specific and unambiguous (e.g., “He demonstrated language skills characteristic of 4-year-old children” versus “He demonstrate poor language skills”)
- ❑ Avoid exaggeration and overstatement (e.g., “*completely* uncooperative,” “*absolutely intelligible*,” “*never* produces /s/,” “*extremely* motivated”)

TIPS FOR PROOFREADING CLINICAL REPORTS
(from Treatment Resource Manual for Speech-Language Pathology)

Ask yourself (and answer) the following questions before turning in a report to a supervisor:

- ☐ Are spelling, grammar and punctuation correct?
- ☐ Are professional terms used accurately?
- ☐ Is there redundancy of word usage or sentence type?
- ☐ Are any sentences too lengthy, rambling, or unfocused?
- ☐ Is all the important client information included in the report?
- ☐ Is information presented only in the germane sections of the report (e.g., recommendation statements should not be included in the background information section)?
- ☐ Does the report follow a logical sequence from one section to the next (i.e., from background, to data and interpretation, to summary and recommendations)?
- ☐ Are raw data interpreted and not merely reported?
- ☐ Are all conclusions and assumptions supported by sufficient data?
- ☐ Are speculative statements explicitly stated as such? (e.g., It is hypothesized that)
- ☐ Does the report contain seemingly contradictory statements without adequate explanation?
- ☐ Is the wording clear or are some statements vague and ambiguous?
- ☐ Is content presented with appropriate emphasis (e.g., Has any critical information been overlooked? Has any minor point been overemphasized)?
- ☐ Is the report written with ethical/legal considerations in mind?