

Creating Context for Understanding: Accessible Report Writing Across Practice Settings and Populations: Practical Activities

Speech Pathology Australia National Conference 2021 workshop presented by Harmony Turnbull, Cathy Olsson, and Amy Fitzpatrick

The presenters have agreed to share the workshop resources to support ongoing learning and reflection on report writing in Speech Pathology practice contexts. During the workshop delegates had the opportunity to apply their new knowledge and skills in small groups. The activities are provided here for speech pathologists to use for their personal learning as individuals or with colleagues. Please do not copy or distribute these resources without permission.

Part 1 – Report Headings

In the table below, there are some headings that are typically used to form sections in speech pathology reports.

Your task is to

1. write a plain language alternative heading
2. write a plain language explanation (no more than 2 sentences) of what the heading means

These steps may help you:

- Reflect: Would the readers of *your* reports understand these headings?
- Discuss: What headings or sections do *you* typically use in your reports?
- Act: Make the headings more 'plain language' and add a plain language explanation of the heading that the majority of audiences will be able to understand.

Standard heading	Plain language alternative and explanation
Reason for referral	
Receptive Language	
Oromotor Assessment	
Education History	
Expressive Language	
Mealtime environment	
Medical History	
Literacy	
Voice	
Social History	
Articulation of Sounds	
Behaviour	

Assessment Strategies	
Fluency	
Dysphagia	
Background information	
Pragmatics	
OMA	

Part 2 – Report Wording

You have a section of a typical report written in standard language.

Use the information from the workshop to rewrite it in plainer language so that more readers are more likely to understand.

Standard wording	<p>Assessment behaviour</p> <p>Oliver presented as a friendly boy who easily made conversation and was comfortable with his mother and the therapist. Oliver preferred to know how many more items were left before he could play with a preferred game, and often changed the topic to talk about preferred interests. Despite this, Oliver easily completed the test items with praise and encouragement.</p> <p>Oliver’s attention, listening and turn-taking skills were informally assessed during the assessment sessions. Assessment indicated that Oliver was able to remain seated and attend to table-top activities for an appropriate length of time. Oliver did find it hard to attend to verbal instructions when there were pictures presented, however he was able to be redirected adequately to complete the assessment tasks.</p>
Plain language alternative	
Standard wording	<p>Receptive Language Skills</p> <p>The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals Pre-School 2 - Australian standardised edition (CELF-P2) was administered to assess Oliver’s current receptive language skills. The formal assessment tasks administered are designed to assess Oliver’s comprehension of spoken sentences of increasing length and complexity, interpretation of spoken directions of increasing length and complexity that contain concepts and his ability to perceive relationships between words that are related.</p> <p>Oliver obtained the following results:</p>

	<table border="1" data-bbox="400 210 954 786"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="400 210 815 331">Sub-test</th> <th data-bbox="815 210 954 331">Standard Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 331 815 421">Sentence Structure</td> <td data-bbox="815 331 954 421">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 421 815 542">Concepts & Following Directions</td> <td data-bbox="815 421 954 542">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 542 815 663">Basic Concepts</td> <td data-bbox="815 542 954 663">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 663 815 786">Total Receptive Language Score</td> <td data-bbox="815 663 954 786">88</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="400 824 1390 965"> Interpretation of results: For each subtest, a score of 7 or above is considered average. Oliver’s score in the “Sentence Structure” subtest did not meet this criteria, although his higher scores in the other subtests meant his average score was normal. </p> <p data-bbox="400 1003 1390 1211"> The “Sentence Structure” subtest ask the child to point to one picture from 4 choices that best captures the sentence read out to them. For example “show me....the spotted puppy is in the box”. Oliver appeared to get distracted by talking about the pictures and not listening to the whole instruction. This skill should be monitored to make sure he continues to develop his listening skills at a longer sentence level. </p>	Sub-test	Standard Score	Sentence Structure	4	Concepts & Following Directions	12	Basic Concepts	9	Total Receptive Language Score	88
Sub-test	Standard Score										
Sentence Structure	4										
Concepts & Following Directions	12										
Basic Concepts	9										
Total Receptive Language Score	88										
Plain language alternative											
Standard wording	<p data-bbox="400 1422 1390 1659"> <i>Expressive Language Skills</i> The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals Pre-School 2 - Australian standardised edition (CELF-P2) was used to assess Oliver’s current expressive language abilities. The formal assessment tasks administered are designed to assess Oliver’s ability to use correct grammar in oral sentences, label objects, people and actions and repeat sentences, which also provides information about working memory skills. Oliver obtained the following results: </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="400 1738 1034 1944"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="400 1738 815 1859">Sub-test</th> <th data-bbox="815 1738 1034 1859">Standard Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1859 815 1944">Word Structure</td> <td data-bbox="815 1859 1034 1944">7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sub-test	Standard Score	Word Structure	7						
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	<table border="1" data-bbox="400 208 1034 510"> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 208 821 297">Expressive Vocabulary</td> <td data-bbox="821 208 1034 297">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 297 821 387">Recalling Sentences</td> <td data-bbox="821 297 1034 387">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 387 821 510">Total Expressive Language Score</td> <td data-bbox="821 387 1034 510">81</td> </tr> </table> <p data-bbox="400 555 1380 795"> Interpretation of results: Oliver found the “Recalling Sentences” subtest very difficult. He found it hard to repeat back exactly the sentence he had heard without adding extra words, and he often muddled up the sentence structure e.g. instead of “the boy fell and hurt himself”, Oliver said “very hurt himself on the book”. Again, this subtest relies on listening to another person. Further monitoring of this skill is recommended to make sure that Oliver can retain instructions. </p> <p data-bbox="400 835 1177 869"> <i>Assessment results indicated a mild delay in expressive language.</i> </p>	Expressive Vocabulary	10	Recalling Sentences	3	Total Expressive Language Score	81
Expressive Vocabulary	10						
Recalling Sentences	3						
Total Expressive Language Score	81						
Plain language alternative							
Standard wording	<p data-bbox="400 1077 799 1111">Articulation (Speech Production)</p> <p data-bbox="400 1111 1364 1391"> Oliver’s speech was generally easy to understand, although he often needed prompts to slow down. Oliver also tended to use rising intonation and “stretch” words out, making each statement sound like a question. Oliver had all of the speech sounds expected for his age. It was noted that Oliver had a mild lisp for the “s” “z” and “s blend” (e.g. “sp” “st”) sounds. He also found “r” blends and “l” blends difficult and often substituted unusual sounds e.g. “drum” was “btum”. Oliver was able to attempt each sound with a visual model, but needed a reminder each time to correct his tongue position. </p> <p data-bbox="400 1431 991 1464"> Oliver presented with a mild speech sound delay. </p>						
Plain language alternative							
Standard wording	<p data-bbox="400 1675 839 1709">Pragmatics (Social Use of Language)</p> <p data-bbox="400 1709 1380 1877"> Oliver’s ability to use language and body language in different social situations to get her message across effectively and appropriately was informally assessed during the assessment session and also using the CELF-P2 Pragmatic Profile. This checklist was completed by Jane. Oliver scored 51, well below the 68 expected for his age. </p> <p data-bbox="400 1917 1364 2018"> Jane reported in the checklist that Oliver only sometimes uses facial expressions to show a range of emotions, he rarely stops a behaviour when asked and rarely asks for permission when the situation requires it. </p>						

	<p>It was reported that Oliver rarely waits until the end of a sentence when someone else is talking to start talking, rarely maintains attention when another person speaks, rarely demonstrates turn-taking and rarely communicated with other children.</p> <p>In the assessment session these difficulties were noted, as well as Oliver needing support to retell events that had happened in a sequential way, with the correct grammar, and enough detail for an unfamiliar listener to understand. Oliver also needed prompting to look at the person he was speaking to</p> <p><i>Oliver presented with a delay in social skills that is not related to his language delay or cognitive function. He will need structured support to learn how to use his words, body and gestures to communicate with others and to understand the social rules of interactions.</i></p>
<p>Plain language alternative</p>	
<p>Standard wording</p>	<p>Understanding Speech</p> <p>I looked at Annabelle’s ability to understand speech.</p> <p>I found that Annabelle could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand common ‘action words’ (. e.g. “Mr Bear is tired, make him go to sleep”) • follow commands (such as “can you give me a cup?”) • engage in symbolic play (such as pretending to drink from an empty cup). • Understand the use of objects e.g. “show me which one is used to drink water”. <p>During the assessment, Annabelle demonstrated difficulty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand pronouns e.g. “me” “you” “mine” and “yours” • Understanding location words such as “in” “on” “under” and “out” <p><i>Based on these assessment results, parental report and informal observations made on the day, Annabelle presented with a mild delay in her receptive language skills.</i></p>
<p>Plain language alternative</p>	
<p>Standard wording</p>	<p>Expressive Language</p> <p>The Expressive Communication score is a measure of a child’s production and use of spoken language. It includes the ability to name actions and objects, use grammar in spoken sentences and give explanations, recounts and stories.</p>

	<p>During the assessment, Annabelle was able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spontaneously produce sentences of up to 4 words (e.g. “bee have a drink”). • label common objects such as “cat” “apple” “bird” • use words for a variety of purposes such as requesting objects, answering questions and using words to get attention. • Use age appropriate speech sounds for her age. <p>During the assessment, Annabelle demonstrated difficulty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using a large variety of words such as nouns, verbs and pronouns. Annabelle preferred to use non-specific words such as “that” “there” “do” that” “go”. These words can get her message across in short sentences such as “do hands”, which meant “can you draw my hand”. <p><i>Based on these assessment results, parental report and informal observations made on the day, Annabelle presented with average expressive language.</i></p>
<p>Plain language alternative</p>	
<p>Standard wording</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annabelle would benefit from repeat testing prior to entering school to ensure that her language skills have continued to develop. This will be particularly important as her attention and concentration improve, and she is able to sit at a table for testing. • Annabelle would benefit from some speech therapy to target her understanding of concepts such as location words and pronouns, if these don’t develop through modelling in daily play with her parents and siblings. • Monitor Annabelle’s use of specific language by modelling specific verbs and nouns in order to help build up her sentence length.
<p>Plain language alternative</p>	