

Clinical Conundrum

Addressing questions related to ethical and clinical practice issues
in speech-language pathology and audiology



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Question: During my training as an SLP (many years ago!) I was told to describe test items or to provide examples that are similar to the ones on the test, but to not quote them directly in my reports. I've recently come across some reports where test questions are directly quoted. What is ACSLPA's position on this issue? Is there a concern that this might encourage some parents to coach their children on specific items, which could invalidate future testing?

You raise an interesting question and I have to say that ACSLPA currently does not have any documented, formal statement on this issue.

One would hope that the provision of select questions or statements from an assessment tool as examples in a report would not be shared by parents with their children, but there's no guarantee of this.

A quote from Pearson, a publisher of assessment materials, was recently shared with me by a colleague, and it states the following:

Pearson Products are protected by various intellectual property laws, including trade secrets, copyright and trademark. Printing or reproducing copyright-protected materials or content, whether the reproductions are sold or furnished free for use, including the reproduction of test items, scales, scoring algorithms, scored directions, or other content, is strictly prohibited by law and by these terms and conditions. ... If Customer is required to disclose secure test materials pursuant to a subpoena or court order, please refer to the Pearson's Litigation Disclosure at PearsonClinical.com

In other jurisdictions across North America, lawsuits against therapists may be more common than in Alberta. Therapists should consider this information when making decisions about what to share in their formal documentation. Provision of an example that is similar, but not a direct quote, is likely prudent!

We welcome your thoughts on this or any other clinical conundrum! Readers are encouraged to submit both their comments and their ethical clinical issues in question format to Susan Rafaat (director2@acslpa.ab.ca) for SLP-related issues and to Holly Gusnowsky (director1@acslpa.ab.ca) for audiology-related issues