Guide to DBP Dictations

Dictating a report on the clinical cases you have seen is an important component of the education on this rotation. The dictation requires you to review the history, evaluation, impressions, and plan. You must capture the essence of the assessment in simple, clear language. You must organize your thoughts in the impressions. You must be careful to include all elements of the plan of care in your recommendations. Processing the information in this way leads to deeper understanding of the issues that face children with delays and disorders and their families.

All reports are reviewed carefully by faculty. In some cases, the medical report is integrated with the psychological findings and/or other evaluations, creating a comprehensive report. Please reread the report after the faculty member has edited it for further understanding about the case. Please read the comprehensive report to understand the specific recommendations for the child.

Distinctive features about consultation notes in Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics are as follows:

• Notes are sent to families as well as to referring physicians. This recommended practice for children with chronic conditions empowers parents with information.
• These notes are sometimes shared directly with community agencies who provide therapeutic and educational services, and whose standards of confidentiality may vary from those in the health center. Therefore, do not include information about mental health problems, drug abuse, or previous physical and sexual abuse of family members unless such information is essential in the formulation (such as referral to Child Protective Services).
• Notes are often used by community agencies to establish a child’s eligibility for therapeutic and educational services and therefore must contain adequate information for that determination. Follow the template to assure that all relevant details are included.

As in other subspecialties, the notes justify the billing for the case. Therefore, it is important that all pertinent sections and elements are included.

Here are recommendations to improve the dictations:

• Refer to parents as Mr. and Mrs. XXX or Dr. XXX or Child’s Name parents. Do not use “mom” and “dad”. Use English terms along with medical terms E.g., the child had macrocephaly (a large head)
• Use short simple sentences. Long sentences are much harder to follow.
• Be as succinct as possible. Avoid starting every sentence or paragraph with “the parents report …” Avoid using some (he had some feeding problems)
• Become aware of the implications of typical medical terminology. When you say “Parents complain that …” they often object that they were not complaining. When you say “Parents deny use of drugs and alcohol” they think you think they used.
• Follow the dictation template or check with the faculty supervisor if you think that another format is preferable.
• Dictate within 3 days of the visit. Go to noon conference and then, if possible, dictate in the afternoon.
• If possible, edit your report prior to its going to the attending.
• Watch tenses. Use present tense for on-going issues (He tantrums every day before school) and past tense for the physical examination.
Thanks for your help in this matter.