



Formerly Hamaguchi & Associates

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Working with the Schools & Other Professionals: Our Role

We are a private practice, not affiliated with any public institution or insurance company. All sessions are to be paid for by the child's parent(s). Please be aware of the following:

- 1. Interacting with Other Professionals:** Our staff is happy to make contact with other professionals for the purposes of finding out more about your child in other settings, so that our intervention is more functional and consistent with other programs OR to share with other professionals information about what we are doing with your child, which strategies are helping, and the goals of our program.
- 2. Share the notebook!** The speech notebooks we use with most students are great vehicles for sharing and explaining what we are doing with your child during our sessions. If we have been in contact with your child's other professionals, they can jot a quick note or question in it as well.
- 3. What we will not do:** We will not tell another professional that what they are doing is "wrong" nor will we demand they do their therapy the way we do it. Please understand that each professional has different training, different materials at their disposal, and different personalities that lend themselves to certain approaches, but not others. We do not wish to insist anyone do the therapy the way that we do it. (If the school-based SLP is interested and wants to know, we are of course open to observations and a quick conversation, but we cannot take on the time and responsibility to "train" them.)
- 4. Phone calls with other professionals:** If you would like us to share information with other professionals who work with your child, please provide us with an "Exchange of Information" form (available at the front desk and on our website) so that we may speak with them. We are happy to speak with anyone you would like for no charge, if the call is 15 minutes or less, and an occasional occurrence. (Once or twice a school year maximum) Calls exceeding 15 minutes are charged to the client at a pro-rated fee of \$226 per hour for any time beyond 15 minutes. Because our schedules are filled with therapy appointments, coordinating phone calls is often challenging, and so you should not expect that we would be able to do so on a regularly-occurring basis to participate in team meetings, etc.
- 5. Email:** SLPs may or may not share their personal email addresses, depending upon their preference due to abuses we have had in this regard in the past. You may email the front office (office@brightstarsspeechtherapy.com) and your email will be forwarded on to your SLP if you wish.
- 6. Evaluating IEP Goals or Reports:** From time to time, we are approached by parents to look at their child's school program and give an opinion on or off-the-record as to the appropriateness of the speech-language goals, testing, etc. that is done by the school-based speech pathologist. Because we are a medical-based practice and do not see your child in school

or know the context of how the goals were derived, it is unfair for us to render an opinion as to the goals or program the other SLP or IEP Team has developed. Therefore, our staff is directed not to become involved in the school IEP process or provide input regarding such, including the amount of mainstreaming, teacher selection, or the goals or nature of the school speech therapy program.

7. **Attending meetings:** We typically *do not* attend IEP meetings or meetings with private school staff, for a variety of reasons. One reason is that our schedules are generally very tight and do not allow us the time to attend. Asking our staff to attend before/after their regularly-scheduled time at Bright Stars is a bit complicated due to labor laws. For example, having a staff member attend an 8am meeting at your child's school, and then proceed to work 10-6pm means that staff member will have less energy for the child at the end of the day, but additionally, it violates labor laws and requires overtime pay. In rare cases, Patti Hamaguchi is available to meet with school teams/staff for the purposes of explaining an assessment and giving input as to how the school/teacher can help the child, but only if the school team is receptive to it and interested. In no case, will we attend a meeting in the role of an "advocate" whose responsibility it is to negotiate services or school placement. Fees for attending meetings are 1.5 times our usual therapy rate, with a 2-hour minimum.
8. **Contracting with schools:** Occasionally, school districts have limited manpower or need to service children who require special expertise, and thus are willing to contract out a child's speech therapy services at our site. Because taking on school contracts requires separate billing, delay in payment, additional meetings and paperwork, and sometimes contentious situations, we generally will decline to participate in school contracts.