

By: Raeel B. [Signature]  
Deputy Agency Clerk

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**IN RE: THE PETITION FOR DECLARATORY STATEMENT OF  
DEMARA BENNETT, Psy.D.**

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**FINAL ORDER**

THIS MATTER came before the Board of Psychology (“Board”) pursuant to Section 120.565, Florida Statutes, at a duly-noticed public meeting held by telephone conference call on June 15, 2007, for the purpose of considering the Petition for Declaratory Statement filed April 5, 2007, by Demara Bennett, Psy.D., (“Petitioner”). Notice of the Petition was published on April 27, 2007, in the Florida Administrative Weekly, Volume 33, No. 17. No comments by interested persons were received. Petitioner was present at the meeting and not represented by counsel. The Board was represented by Mary Ellen Clark, Assistant Attorney General. Having considered the petition, the Board makes the following findings and conclusions:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Petitioner provides evaluation as part of a multidisciplinary team through Florida State University’s FIRST WORDS Project as part of a research project related to early identification of autism spectrum disorders. The reports are used for research purposes and to offer clinical information to the families of the assessed children.
2. Rule 64B19-18.004(5), Florida Administrative Code, provides that it “shall be a violation of this rule for a psychologist to sign any evaluation or assessment unless the psychologist has had an active role in the evaluation or assessment of the subject as required by subsection (4) of this rule. A psychologist may not sign any evaluation or assessment that is signed by any other person unless the psychologist is signing as a

supervisor in conjunction with an evaluation or assessment performed by a psychological intern, psychological trainee or psychological resident.”

3. Petitioner first asks whether, when the evaluation is completed as part of a research program, may a licensed psychologist sign the reports conjointly with licensed professionals from other disciplines, provided the report clearly identifies which professionals completed specific portions of the evaluation?

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

4. The Board has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Section 120.565, Florida Statutes.

5. The Board answers the question in the affirmative; yes, when an evaluation is completed as part of a research program, a licensed psychologist may sign the reports conjointly with licensed professionals from other disciplines, provided the report clearly identifies which professionals completed specific portions of the evaluation and specifically identifies the licensed psychologist’s contributions and impressions.

6. The Board finds that Petitioner’s second question is rendered moot in its answer to the first question and thus, declines to answer.

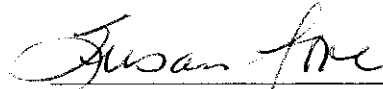
7. The Board finds that Petitioner’s third question does not ask for an interpretation of a specific law or rule under the jurisdiction of the Board and thus, declines to answer.

8. This Order constitutes final agency action and may be appealed by any party pursuant to Section 120.68, Florida Statutes, and Rules 9.110 and 9.190, Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure, by filing a notice of appeal conforming to the requirements of Rule 9.110(d), Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure, both with the appropriate District Court of Appeal, accompanied

by the appropriate filing fee, and with the department's clerk of agency proceedings, within thirty (30) days of rendition of this Order.

**DONE AND ORDERED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of June 2007.

**BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY**

  
Susan Love, Executive Director  
for Herbert Goldstein, Ph.D., Chair

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was furnished by U.S. Mail to Demara Bennett, Psy.D., Florida State University FIRST WORDS Project, 625 B North Adams Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301; and by interoffice mail to Mary Ellen Clark, Assistant Attorney General, Administrative Law Section, PL-01 The Capitol, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050, this 21 day of June 2007.



**Deputy Agency Clerk**



FIRST WORDS Project  
625 B North Adams Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Phone: (850) 488-5780  
Fax: (850) 644-3644  
Website: firstwords.fsu.edu

March 29, 2007

Department of Health  
Agency Clerk's Office  
4052 Bald Cypress Way  
Bin #A02  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1703

**FILED**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
DEPUTY CLERK  
CLERK: *Racine Blen*  
DATE 4.5.07

Re: Petition for Declaratory Statement Before the Board of Psychology

I am a licensed psychologist in the state of Florida seeking clarification about the requirements in FL Administrative Code 64B19-18.004 (5) specifying that "A psychologist may not sign any evaluation or assessment that is signed by any other person unless the psychologist is signing as a supervisor in conjunction with an evaluation or assessment performed by a psychological intern, psychological trainee or psychological resident". I provide evaluation as part of a multidisciplinary team through Florida State University's FIRST WORDS Project as part of a research project related to early identification of autism spectrum disorders. The reports are used for research purposes and to offer clinical information to the families of the assessed children.

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PSYCHOLOGY  
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My questions include the following:

1. When the evaluation is completed as part of a research program, can a licensed psychologist sign the reports conjointly with licensed professionals from other disciplines as long as the report clearly identifies which professionals completed specific portions of the evaluation (as specified in FL Administrative Cod 64B19-18.004 (2) (d))?
2. How does the Board recommend that multidisciplinary teams (the best-practice Approach empirically supported for autism spectrum evaluations) reflect the team's evaluation and findings within a unified report if the psychologist is not permitted to co-sign those reports?

Providing Early Identification for Families of Infants and Toddlers with Communication Delays

Amy Wetherby, Ph.D.  
Professor and Project Director

Laura Newton  
Family Resource Coordinator

Susan Brosnan-Maddox, M.S. CCC-SLP  
Coordinator of Clinical Programs

Vickie N. Peace, B.S.  
Coordinator of Clinical Programs

Supported by the U.S. Dept. of Education,  
National Institutes of Health, and Centers  
for Disease Control and Prevention



Florida State University  
Department of Communication Disorders

3. Are there any titles for the report the Board could recommend as appropriate in addition to "Psychological Report" or "Psychological Evaluation Summary" if a licensed psychologist has taken a primary and/or active role in the evaluation to better reflect a multidisciplinary evaluation and summary (i.e., "Multidisciplinary Developmental Evaluation, etc.)?

I would appreciate any guidance or suggestions you have about how to resolve this issue. The psychologist position is a new position within this department, and the team is attempting to reconcile the rules reflected in FL Administrative Code 54B19-18.004 with a multidisciplinary approach.

Sincerely,



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Florida State University  
FIRST WORDS Project  
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