

Working With Interpreters



There are lots of things to learn when you start working with interpreters. Below are some tips to help you and your child maximise communication.

Meet with the interpreter beforehand

- If you can meet the interpreter before your appointment or event this will give you time to go over names that might be used during the communication, any home signs you have developed or any other pieces of information that will give the interpreter context.

Interpreter should be in the child or parents sight line

- Sitting directly across from the interpreter is very important for the deaf or hard of hearing child or young person. They must have a clear and direct view.
- In small group discussions, consider using a circle or semi-circle seating arrangement instead of a theatre style arrangement.

Be aware of lighting

- Provide good lighting so the interpreter can be seen.
- If lights will be turned off or dimmed, be sure the interpreter can still be seen clearly

Talk directly to the deaf person

- Sometimes when an interpreter is present it can be difficult to know where to direct conversation. The best thing to do is to maintain eye contact with the deaf person and direct all your comments towards them.
- Avoid directing comments to the interpreter (i.e. "Tell him..." or "Ask her..."), respond directly to the deaf person.

Speak naturally

- Speak at your normal pace. Interpreters will ask you to slow down or repeat if necessary.
- Interpreters listen for concepts and ideas, not just words, to render an accurate interpretation.

Avoid private conversations - everything will be interpreted

- Whatever the interpreter hears will be interpreted. Do not ask the interpreter to censor any portion of the conversation.

Ask the deaf directly if they are following the conversation.

It can be good to check in every now and then to make sure that the conversation or communication is being clearly understood.

One person should speak at a time

- An interpreter can only accommodate one speaker at a time. Encourage the group to follow this rule.

Avoid asking the interpreter for opinions or comments regarding the content of the meeting

- Interpreters follow a code of ethics and are required to be impartial in every setting.
- Do not assume the interpreter has prior knowledge of the deaf person or will be interpreting future appointments.

Provide a short break every hour

- Interpreting is mentally and physically taxing.
- Do not expect the interpreter to interpret during these breaks

For further information about Deaf Children Australia.

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Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf' to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.

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