

IEP MEETING ETIQUETTE WHEN USING AN INTERPRETER

Before the Meeting

Discuss with the interpreter what will be covered. Provide the interpreter with copies of the agenda and/or other print materials for review and to follow as the meeting progresses. Ask the interpreter about any additional needs, such as a glass of water, a straight back chair, etc. Arrange the best positioning for participants and interpreter to ensure effective and comfortable communication. A sign language interpreter should not be backlit.

During the Meeting- Both Limited English or Deaf Participants

- Ask the interpreter at the beginning if they have requests or directions.
- Speak directly to the limited-English-proficient (LEP) or deaf person, not to the person doing the interpreting.
- Don't say anything that you do not want interpreted. Never have side conversations during the meeting.
- Use words, not just gestures, to convey your meaning.
- Speak slowly, clearly and in a normal tone of voice and use simple vocabulary.
- Explain jargon and technical terms when necessary.
- Speak in short simple sentences, pausing to permit the interpretation. Remember that the interpreter is a few words behind the speaker.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Permit only one person to speak at a time during group discussions. It is difficult for an interpreter to follow several people speaking at once. Ask for a brief pause between speakers to permit the interpreter to finish before the next speaker starts. It can be helpful to ask people to raise their hands and wait to speak after they have been recognized.
- Allow the person doing the interpreting to stop you and seek clarification when necessary.
- Remember the interpreter will be using first-person language.
- If you suspect that your message is not fully understood by the interpreter or individual, double check to see if s/he understands. Be prepared to rephrase your statement.

Considerations Specific to Deaf Interpretation

- While direct eye contact is valued particularly in one-to-one meetings, direct eye contact on the part of the deaf individual is not always possible as the individual will need to watch as the interpreter signs.
- American Sign Language (ASL) is a language in its own right, with its own grammar, syntax and structure which includes using body and facial expression. It is important to realize that you are dealing with two different languages and that it may be necessary to rephrase or repeat your point. Examples are helpful to use for clarification.