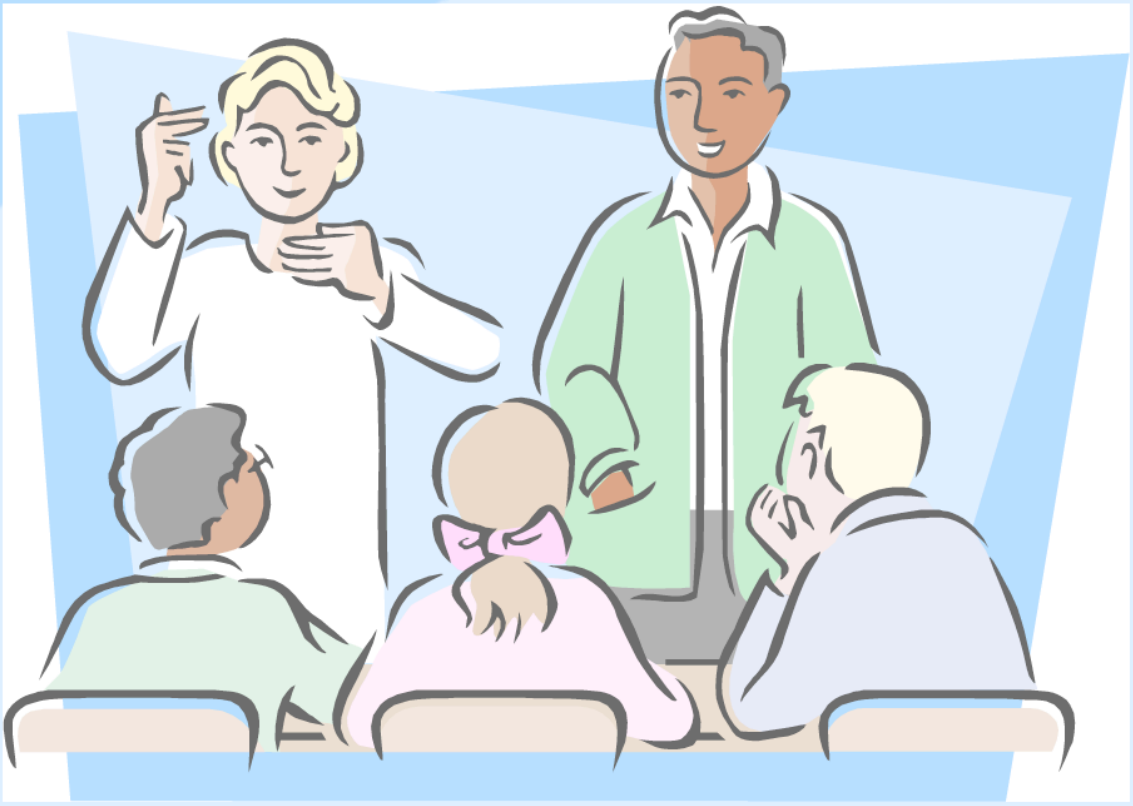

The Interpreted Education

A Guide for Educational Teams

2009

Authors

Bonnie Lyn Barker, Interpreter Coordinator, NMSD
Cindy Huff, Coordinator, Center for Information, Training and Professional Development, NMSD

Contributors

NMSD Outreach and Step*Hi Teams
NMSD Staff
Workshop Attendees throughout New Mexico

Editorial Input

Rosemary Gallegos, Assistant Superintendent, NMSD
Brenda Nicodemus, Ph.D., CI/CT/NIC-Adv
Ronald J. Stern, Ed.D, Superintendent, NMSD

For further information or to request training related to the content in this document contact

New Mexico School for the Deaf
Outreach Department
505.476.6400 (v/tty) or 800.841.6699 (v/tty)

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INTRODUCTION

This document is designed to support educational teams working with deaf or hard-of-hearing students who use signed language interpreting services. Student success in an interpreted environment is dependant on multiple factors. An interactive and trained educational team holds the key to providing an optimal interpreted environment in a K–12 setting.

Direct vs. Interpreted Instruction

Direct, multidimensional communication in the K–12 setting is more efficient, effective, and empowering than interpreted communication, which is more linear and involves a third party. However, when direct and multidimensional communication is not possible for all or part of the educational process for a student, it is critical that quality standards for interpreters be in place. This document will guide the reader through the multiple factors that determine whether or not an interpreted education will be successful in providing an appropriate education for the student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Communication Considerations Dialogue

The Communication Considerations IEP Addendum guides state required dialogue to address the unique communication needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. *The Interpreted Education: A Guide for Educational Teams* will support IEP teams as they develop the Communication Considerations Addendum for students for whom interpreting is being considered as a related service. The complexity of the interpreted environment and the impact on students should be accurately documented in the Communication Considerations Addendum of the IEP.

"The NAD, consistent with the National Deaf Education Project (NDEP), a collaborative project of the American Society for Deaf Children, the Conference of Educational Administrators of the Deaf, Gallaudet University, the National Association of the Deaf, and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, believes that direct and uninhibited language and communication access to the curriculum, and all facets of the schooling experience are essential for a deaf child to achieve equality of opportunity.

National Association of the Deaf (2003) *White Paper: 2003 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* (2003 recommendations to 2004 reauthorization)

STUDENT ACCESS TO THE K–12 ENVIRONMENT

Student Access to the Whole School Experience

It must be kept in mind that people are social and communal. **Research shows that social and communal experiences are indispensable for quality learning and development of language, thinking skills and the human potential** (Atkinson, 2002; Brandt, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Hearing children generally have ongoing interactions with people, language, and communication—at home and in school. In essence, because of these opportunities, they are *members* of their home and school communities. Contrarily, communication and access for deaf and hard-of-hearing children are often stunted or not direct and two-way. Therefore, all too often, they are *visitors* rather than members, even within their classrooms and other parts of their school.

This is why schools and **IEP teams must focus on granting quality, natural, and ongoing social and communal experiences at school for the deaf child**. These are critical for each child to experience *membership* as participating, engaged learners. This is fundamental for their education and development as full-fledged human beings. **Different kinds of learning and interaction opportunities at school must be humanely accessible for the deaf or hard-of-hearing child as they routinely are for other children.**

References

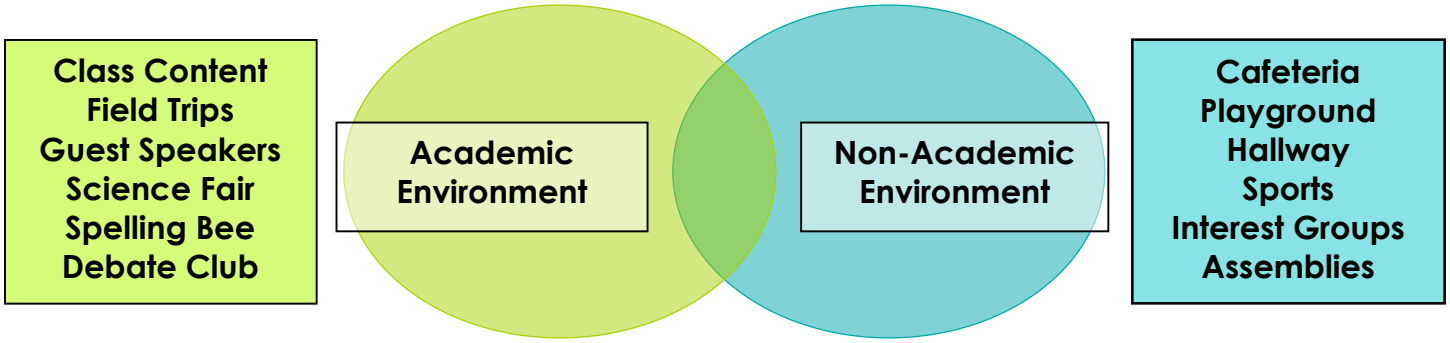
Atkinson, D. (2002). Toward a sociocognitive approach to second language acquisition. Modern Language Journal (86), 525-545.

Brandt, M.E. (1990). Getting social about critical thinking: Power and constraints of apprenteceships.

Watson-Gegeo, K. (2004). Mind, Language, and Epistemology: Toward a Language Socialization Paradigm for Second Language Acquisition. Modern Language Journal, 88(iii), 331-350.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). Thought and Language. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

All Aspects of the School Environment



When reflecting on their school experiences, adults often remember an occurrence on the playground or in the hallway as strongly as they remember a classroom lesson. **In order for the school experience to be accessible, ALL aspects of the school experience must be considered**.

Incidental learning is a powerful component in academic and social development. In order for the school experience to be accessible, ALL elements of the school experience must be available to the student. For example, overheard conversations can help a student identify who they want their friends to be. These overheard conversations can also enhance and support academic content development.

Interpreters often have challenges in determining which messages to interpret. When multiple conversations are going on it is impossible to interpret them all simultaneously. **How does an interpreter prioritize multiple messages in a complex environment?**

"Even when an interpreter is highly skilled and has a good professional relationship with the regular classroom teacher, a deaf or hard-of-hearing child's education is different by means of an interpreter. A student's access to the classroom discourse and authentic peer interactions and friendships are highly relevant to the development of thinking skills. Access is not just about what the teacher says."

Brenda Schick, 2004. How Might Learning through an Educational Interpreter Influence Cognitive Development? Educational Interpreting How It Can Succeed 4: 73–85.

In some cases, sidebar student conversations may even take precedence over the content message of the teacher. Students using an interpreter should have free choice, as they are developmentally able, to access the conversations of their choice throughout the school day just as any hearing student would. If there are questions about behavior or classroom management, those fall to the classroom teacher, not the interpreter.

The Lived Reality

What is the true experience of a deaf or hard-of-hearing student in an interpreted environment? For hearing professionals, it is often difficult to walk in the student's shoes and accurately assess the environment in terms of access and experiencing membership. Educational teams need to be keenly aware of the factors that make an environment inclusive or not inclusive. All too often, the lived realities of the deaf or hard-of-hearing child are such that physical inclusion does not equate even routine membership or inclusiveness. Thus, it is important for the following to be considered:

- Does the student have fluent language models that provide access and language exposure to all aspects of the school day?
- Does the student feel like a visitor or member of the school community?
- What opportunities does the student have for direct communication with peers and staff in both instructional and social settings?
- Does the student have quality access to incidental communication and learning in and out of the classroom?
- Is the student proactive and confident in communicating and interacting in their school environment?

Assessing Levels of Access and Inclusion

Educational teams are encouraged to invite a deaf professional into the school environment to informally assess the overall school experience of the deaf or hard-of-hearing student. The deaf professional has a unique perspective to make an observation regarding access, inclusion, and inclusiveness—they may have been in the shoes of the student and are likely well equipped to provide insight to a hearing educational team.

Often, the deaf or hard-of-hearing student can provide input to help the educational team understand their personal experience. Whenever possible, the student's feedback should be solicited. In many cases, due to limited language, limited experience using interpreting services, and other factors, the student might not have a critical eye from which to assess their own environment. In either case, a deaf professional could be of great assistance to the educational team. They could, very possibly, provide the team with information a group of hearing professionals would likely be unable to discern having not shared the experience of being a deaf or hard-of-hearing child.

BACKGROUND OF INTERPRETING

K–12 Interpreting: A Historical Perspective

The field of signed language interpreting began as a service to deaf and hard-of-hearing adults. Signed language interpreters provided a service for hearing and deaf people who wanted to communicate with their colleagues, clients, and service providers.

In the mid 1970s, interpreting was first considered an applicable service for students. In 1975, the passage of Public Law 94-142, All Handicapped Children's Act, required that children with disabilities be educated in the "least restrictive environment" and to the maximum extent possible with non-disabled children. The law had a significant effect on the education of deaf children in accelerating the trend of educating deaf and hard-of-hearing children in public schools.

Prior to 1975, most deaf and hard-of-hearing students attended state schools for the Deaf. As a result of P.L. 94-142, many of these students returned to the public schools near their home. Schools around the country were forced to grapple with ways to provide communication and language access to the students joining their programs. **The field of K–12 Interpreting was born in response to educational trends.** A relatively young field, the demand for K–12 Interpreters has never been higher. Today, the majority of deaf and hard-of -hearing students are educated in public schools in their home communities.

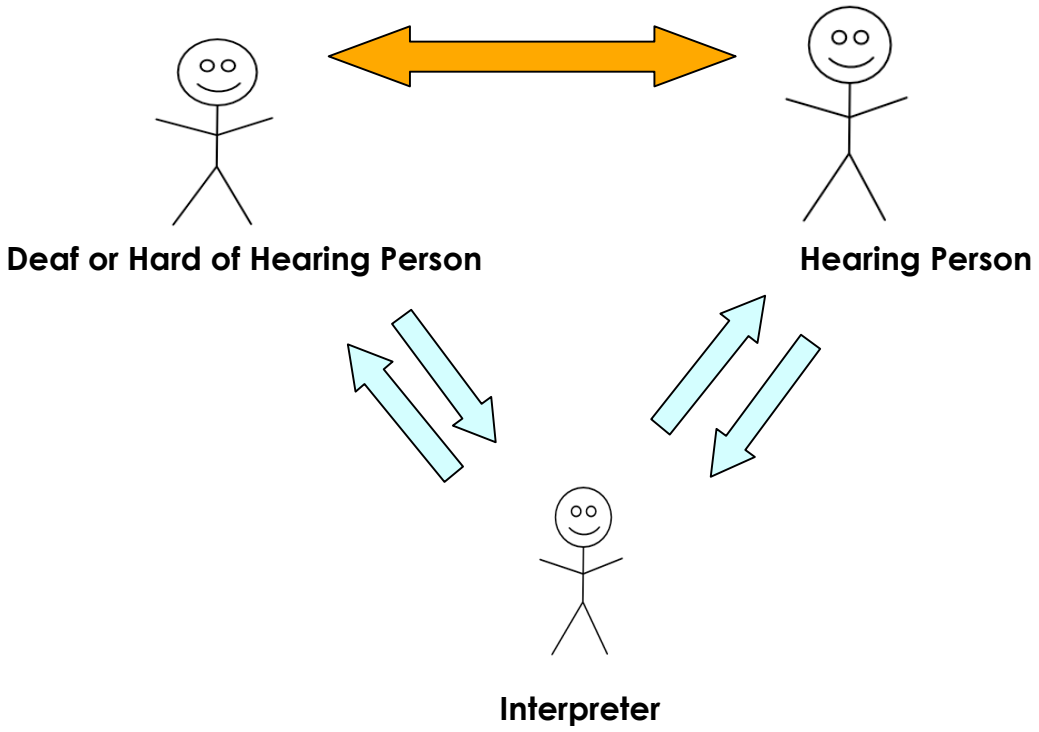
Beginning in 1980, multiple studies and guidance from the Department of Education have indicated that meeting the unique communication needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing is a fundamental part of providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The 1997 Reauthorization of IDEA included a provision for "special considerations" related to deaf and hard of hearing students' communication and language needs. This law was reauthorized in 2004 and states that IEP teams must do the following:

Consideration of Special Factors (from IDEA-04): In developing each student's IEP, the IEP team must consider—the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode (34 CFR 300.324 (a) (2) (iv)).

This law is implemented through the Communication Considerations IEP addendum (2004) in New Mexico. The implications of an interpreted education must be thoroughly examined through meaningful dialogue when completing this required form.

The Service of Interpreting

Signed language interpreters facilitate communication between persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and use signed language and persons who can hear and use spoken language. A signed language interpreter facilitates communication between deaf and hearing people, signing what is said and speaking what is signed.



Items to Consider

- An interpreted education only has potential to be successful when an **interactive and trained educational team** is in place**.**
- **Each member of the educational team plays an important role** in making the interpreted environment a success.
- **Every student has a different language and communication profile.** Therefore, the interpreter's approach will vary from student to student.
- **Interpreting is different and less accessible than direct communication and has implications on the student's educational experience.** The educational team benefits from knowing the complexity of interpreting and the implications within an educational environment.
- **Not all students are prepared to access the curriculum and other school experiences through an interpreter.**

Goals of the Interpreted Education

Students will have opportunities to…

- access the educational curriculum,
- communicate with their peers,
- participate in classroom discussions,
- build relationships with the teacher and other adults in the educational environment,
- become contributing citizens in their school communities, and
- succeed and fail based on their own performance.

Assessing Student Readiness to Use an Interpreter

This was developed in collaboration with the staff at the New Mexico School for the Deaf by Cindy Huff, Coordinator of the Center for Information, Training and Professional Development.

Assessing Student Readiness to Use an Interpreter

Not all students are ready to access instruction through an interpreter. Before a student is placed with an interpreter, it is critical to consider and evaluate a spectrum of communication and language competencies of the student. This information will assist the educational team in determining the student's strengths and needs in accessing the general curriculum through an interpreter. The following language and communication information must be considered by the educational team. Once this information has been gathered, the team can better determine the educational needs of the student using an interpreter.

_____ **What is the ability of the student to maintain eye contact with interpreter?**

***Consider*:** length of time the student is able to watch the interpreter; ability of student to access information from the interpreter while navigating the other visual supports in the classroom

_____ **What is the ability of the student to ask for clarification or repetition?**

Consider: level of student assertiveness; student's ability to know if their confusion is from the interpretation or from the content or teaching style of the teacher

_____ **What are the cognitive abilities of the student?**

Consider: interpreter's potential need to adapt message**;** history of early language exposure and acquisition; academic problem solving skills

_____ **What are the social emotional abilities of the student?**

Consider: student's overall classroom and social behaviors related to his or her chronological age; student's emotional responses to stress, transitions in their daily schedule, discipline, and typical peer interactions; student's self-confidence and autonomy; student's social problem solving skills

_____ **Will the interpreted message be supporting spoken language or replacing it?**

Consider: degree of hearing loss; functional and/or potential use of amplification or cochlear implant; age of onset; age of recognition of hearing loss

_____ **What is visual capability of the student?**

Consider: Are there any vision issues that would impact the way interpretation is provided or received?

_____ **What are the signed language skills (e.g., ASL) of the student?**

Consider:

Pragmatic Skills—range of functions (use of language); use of language outside of the present and immediate environment; abstract reasoning and theory of mind; discourse skills; identification of effectiveness of mode(s) or language(s) used to communicate in a variety of settings

Receptive Skills—level of understanding (e.g., questions, conversations, simple or connected communicative language; references to the immediate and/or to the not present, abstract, or imaginative)

Expressive Skills—level of self-expression (e.g., questions, conversations, simple or connected communicative language; references to the immediate and/or to the not present, abstract, or imaginative)

Semantics/Vocabulary—number and variety of vocabulary

Syntax—structure and complexity of the language used by the student; for young children and delayed language users, type and variety of semantic relations

_____ **What are the language skills in all other languages (e.g., English, Spanish, Navajo) of the student?**

***Consider*:** All of the considerations listed above (for any and all languages used by the student)

_____ **What are the speech and auditory skills of the student?**

Consider: How does the student use speech functionally to communicate? intelligibility; articulation analysis (if appropriate); developmental stage of auditory skills learning (this may impact the interpreter's decision-making about whether or not voice interpretation is provided)

_____ **What are the English spelling skills of the student?**

Consider: ability to access fingerspelling/fingerspelling expressive and receptive skills

_____ **Does the student know they are deaf or hard of hearing?**

Consider: Does the student have a concept of how hearing people access information and their own need to access that information visually?

"Whenever possible, the aspect of language under investigation should be assessed using a variety of formal and informal approaches, and findings should be integrated both within and across pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic domains."

Janet R. Jamieson, 2003. Formal and Informal Approaches to the Language Assessment of Deaf Children. *Deaf Studies, Language, and Education.* 20: 275–288.

Types of Services that Match Student Need

In an integrated setting, it is often assumed that integration truly happens and that a K–12 interpreter is the "solution" for a deaf or hard-of-hearing student to access the academic curriculum. Sometimes that is true, but *often it is not the case*.

Is the student

- Developmentally on track in language, social emotional and cognitive skills? (Consider all aspects listed on previous pages.)
- Familiar with the interpreter role and developmentally ready (as determined by the educational team)?
- Able to handle the standard curriculum in an integrated setting ***with minimal support***?

What strategies and tools have been used to answer these questions?

Yes?

The student *is likely* ready to receive services from a **K–12 interpreter** for some of their academic schedule.

(Monitoring the access to curriculum is required on an ongoing basis to ensure this service is still effective. The team must consider when a student will benefit from direct instruction.)

Is the student

- Developmentally on track in language, social emotional, and cognitive skills? (Consider all aspects listed on previous pages.)
- Familiar with the interpreter role and developmentally ready (as determined by the educational team)?
- Able to handle the standard curriculum in an integrated setting ***with considerable support***?

What strategies and tools have been used to answer these questions?

Yes?

The student *may* be ready to receive services from a **K–12 interpreter with teacher's aide support** for some of their academic schedule.

(Monitoring the access to curriculum is required on an ongoing basis to ensure this service is still effective. The team must consider when a student will benefit from direct instruction.)

Is the student

- Lagging developmentally in language, social emotional, and cognitive skills? (Consider all aspects listed on previous pages.)
- Familiar with the interpreter role and developmentally ready (as determined by the educational team)?
- Able to handle the standard curriculum in an integrated setting ***with intensive support and supplemental instruction***?

What strategies and tools have been used to answer these questions?

Yes?

The student *may or may not* be ready to receive services from a **K–12 interpreter with tutoring support** for some of their academic schedule.

(Monitoring the access to curriculum is required on an ongoing basis to ensure this service is still effective. The team must consider when a student will benefit from direct instruction.)

Is the student

- Limited developmentally in language, social emotional, and cognitive skills? (Consider all aspects listed on previous pages.)
- Unfamiliar with the interpreter role and not developmentally ready (as determined by the educational team)?
- Not able to understand an interpreter *or* handle the standard curriculum in an integrated setting?

What strategies and tools have been used to answer these questions?

Yes?

The student *is not* ready to receive interpreting service and *requires* services from an **Educational Team** trained in working with D/HH students and fluent in the student's language and communication mode.

(Monitoring the access to curriculum is required on an ongoing basis to ensure this service is still effective.)

When a Student is NOT Ready for Interpreted Education

This was developed in collaboration with the staff at the New Mexico School for the Deaf by Cindy Huff, Coordinator, Center for Information, Training and Professional Development.

When the educational team determines that the deaf or hard-of-hearing student cannot effectively access some or all aspects of instruction and/or interaction with peers and staff through an interpreter, the student should have the following:

- An environment where the deaf student, staff, and peers can communicate directly and fluently with each other
- An educational team that is formally trained in working with deaf/hard-of-hearing students
- An educational team that is able to meet identified student needs in all incidental and structured learning opportunities outside the classroom
- An educational team that has knowledge and skills in assessing student progress in communication and overall language and consistently incorporates assessment information into educational programming
- An educational team that can provide a parallel experience in the classroom, exposing the student to the same concepts being introduced to all students
- An educational team that can simplify or expand concepts as appropriate
- An educational team that can develop a specific plan to monitor and assess the development of the student's language

STUDENT SELF-ADVOCACY

The K–12 Interpreter as a Guide in Students' Development of Self-Advocacy Skills

In our daily lives, most of us are accustomed to direct communication with people who share a common language. Communicating through a third party or an interpreter can be a strange experience. **People who use interpretation services must learn how to use third-person communication as it can be confusing and is "unnatural."**

This is especially true for a young child who receives an accessible (signed) message from an adult who is not the originator of that message. For a deaf or hard of hearing student, it may be confusing which adult is responsible for giving assignments, checking work, and disciplining the class. The teacher whom the student must respond to, report to, turn in assignments to, and be disciplined by is not the person he/she is receiving the message from. For example, the teacher asks her second grade class to write a story about dogs and hand it in before recess. The deaf or hard-of-hearing student receives this information through an interpreter. Upon completing the task, the student must turn the work in to the teacher although the message came from the interpreter.

Interpreters working with students in the K–12 setting have different roles than interpreters who work with adults. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children who use interpretation services in their educational settings may ultimately use those services in their community lives as adults. An important component of the interpreter's role is guiding students in the appropriate use of interpretation services so as adults, they are prepared to effectively access interpretation services in such settings as work, healthcare, and higher education.

Interpreters should consider how to continually move the student toward self-advocacy and independence in the use of interpretation services. Developing independence is a fluid process that warrants periodic reflection as it occurs in different classes, settings and grades. The student should be guided to increasing self-advocacy and independence without feeling abandoned or overwhelmed.

The following page serves as a visual illustration of this process of developing self-advocacy and independence. Young students have a small but growing responsibility toward self-advocacy. Interpreters initially have greater responsibility to support students in their development of self-advocacy.

In this specific example, a student is reporting being teased and bullied on the playground. As the diagram illustrates, the interpreter's response should change as the student becomes more empowered in the use of interpretation services.

The Interpreter as a Guide: An example of a student's development of self-advocacy skills

EXAMPLE: Over time, a Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing student reports bullying and teasing on the playground. Notice how the interpreter guides the student to an appropriate use of interpreting services.

Student
Increased independence over time

K-12 Interpreter
Decreased support over time

Student approaches interpreter (the only signer in the school) to report that another student has bullied and teased him on the playground.

1

Interpreter mediates between the two children and encourages the deaf or hard-of-hearing student to talk to the teacher.

Student approaches interpreter saying "tell her" or "tell him" about the situation.

2

Interpreter suggests they approach the teacher and the student addresses the teacher directly using first person.

Student approaches interpreter requesting services to report incident to appropriate staff.

3

Interpreter offers several options of people in the school community to whom the student could report the incident to and offers to interpret between the student and whomever he decides is appropriate.

4

At the student's suggestion, the interpreter and student approach appropriate staff and the interpreter interprets the student's report about the incident.

GOAL: Increase levels of student independence while simultaneously decreasing levels of support from interpreter.

Educational Team Responsibilities

K–12 Interpreter

Represent Professionalism

Comply with performance standards, policies, practices, and regulations of the school district in which they are interpreting.

Conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the values underlying the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct.

Report drug/alcohol use or possession and any other activity that poses a threat to the safety of the students and others when required to by law, principle, or policy.

Provide Interpretation

Interpret in instructional situations, including student-to-student dialogue.

Interpret in non-instructional situations such as guidance and counseling sessions, tutorials, assemblies, field-trips, and any other situation requiring communication during the school day.

Prepare for interpreting assignments by attempting to acquire and becoming familiar with materials to be covered.

Receive feedback from fellow interpreters, students, and other users of interpreting services.

Collaborate with Colleagues

Establish open and communicative relationships with the classroom teacher and other members of the educational team.

Participate as a member of the school's educational team with the specific responsibility of providing communication between individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and others.

Participate in the educational team meetings by commenting on the interpreting process and discussing students' use of interpreting services within a particular situation.

Work collaboratively with the educational team and principal of the school to develop a list of appropriate substitute interpreters at the beginning of each school year.

Advise on the visual accessibility of the school environment (classroom, auditorium, library, etc.).

Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Student

Use Interpretation Services

Indicate when an interpreter's signs are not understood so the interpreter can clarify or change them.

Be aware that the interpreter will voice signed communication (e.g., conversations taking place during class time).

Make the interpreter aware if a conversation is private.

Ask for permission from the teacher to have exams interpreted into signed language.

Show the interpreter any technical signs or other signs that will facilitate a better interpretation.

Direct questions to the teacher or person with whom you are communicating. Do not direct questions to the interpreter.

Face the group or person with whom they are communicating.

Know when interpreters have not done their job well and make suggestions and complaints in an acceptable manner.

Accept Responsibility for Performance

Be aware that personal conversations with the interpreter should not interfere with class work.

Accept responsibility to remember things (e.g., exam dates, homework assignments, etc.). Do not expect interpreters to do that.

Accept responsibility for miscommunication, failing an exam, or missing a deadline. Students are responsible for their own performances.

Accept Responsibility for Communication and Access

Ask for a note taker, if one is needed.

Communicate with the teacher regularly regarding performance on exams, homework assignments, test dates, school supplies, etc.

Participate in class.

Initiate conversations with peers and staff.

Study and prepare for tests and complete assignments.

Indicate when the speaker isn't understood.

Classroom Teacher

Have High Expectations for Students

Expect the same level of participation, work habits, behavior, and academic performance from the student who is deaf or hard of hearing as you would expect from the other students in your class.

Respect the individuality of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing while maintaining the same expectation for behavior and performance for all students.

Facilitate Communication

Look directly at the student who is deaf or hard of hearing when communicating with them.

Plan and monitor the tutoring process with other members of the educational team as necessary.

Avoid obstructing the student's view of the interpreter.

Use visual aids such as blackboards and overhead projectors as they augment the visual learning of students generally and the student who is deaf or hard of hearing specifically.

Use Interpretation Services

Allow the interpreter access to all materials necessary for adequate preparation. The more time the interpreter has to prepare for a lecture, film, etc., the more accurate the interpretation will be.

Expect the interpreter will use first person when interpreting.

Understand that the interpreter will be slightly behind the speaker (process time), and therefore ,the student who is deaf or hard of hearing will receive the information slightly behind the other students. For the student to fully participate in the classroom, these few extra seconds should be considered when posing questions, lecturing, or seeking input from the class.

Understand that while working, an interpreter should not be called upon to perform non-interpreting tasks.

Speak at a normal rate, enabling the interpreter to provide a smooth interpretation.

Be prepared for any comment that you communicate to the interpreter in the presence of the student who is deaf to be interpreted to the student. Do not say things to the interpreter or in front of the student that you do not wish to have interpreted.

Special/Deaf Educator

- Provide support for general classroom teacher regarding instructional and assessment strategies that will best address the academic and social needs of deaf and hard of hearing students.
- Monitor student progress in IEP goals and in the general curriculum.
- Provide direct instruction for the deaf or hard-of-hearing student when deemed appropriate.
- Provide supplemental instruction when appropriate.
- Provide "case manager" services for the deaf or hard-of-hearing student.

School Community

- Understand how to use interpreting services to communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing students and staff.
- Work with the district to ensure the whole school community has training regarding interpreter use.
- Maintain eye contact directly with deaf and hard–of-hearing students and staff when communicating through an interpreter.
- Learn as much signed language as possible in order to have direct communication opportunities with deaf and hard of hearing students and staff

Parents

- Consistently check in with child/teen regarding overall school experience

- Be informed and a contributing member of the educational team for all decision-making, including those decisions related to interpreting services.

- Know the credentials of the interpreting staff.

- Have ongoing conversations with the educational team about student success in the interpreted environment.

Local Education Agency

- Maintain awareness that interpreted communication does not replicate fluid direct communication with peers and adults.

- Ensure the whole school community has training regarding interpreter use.

- Ensure quality access for the student at all times—even when the interpreter is absent (e.g.,. substitute interpreters, notetakers, etc.).

- Ensure interpreters have annual evaluation by a skilled evaluator and provide ongoing professional development opportunities.

- Understand the importance of the interpreter in a student's education, and therefore, do not hire unqualified individuals.

- Ensure that educational team is carefully considering solutions when a student lacks readiness to use an interpreter.

- Ensure all issues related to the student's use of interpretation are effectively documented in the Communication Considerations IEP Addendum.

Rationale for Changing Interpreter–Student Pairings

Typically if a student/interpreter match continues over a number of years, the signed language used can become increasingly code-like. As a result, conversations and interpretations may become condensed with many omissions. When two people have a familiar relationship and communicate regularly, they need to say less for a message to be understood. This is not a positive trait in the long-term relationship of student/interpreter pairings.

In the interpreted environment, the original message needs to be relayed fully and richly. In a long-standing interpreter/student match, there is the risk of the interpretation being a reflection of the student/ interpreter communication style. Varying speakers' critical thinking skills, discourse styles, and personalities may be eliminated or diluted from the interpreted message.

Students need opportunities to learn strategies for processing a range of messages sent by individuals who have very different communication styles. Interpreters must strive to always present the most accurate reflection of the speaker's message without shifting to an inferior, though comfortable, interpretation.

The following outlines the progression of the student/interpreter relationship:

First year Interpreter and student become familiar with each other's communication styles. The better trained an interpreter is, and the more experience they have, the more consistent their approach will be with that of their professional peers. However, there are several factors that the student and the interpreter will need to sort out:

- ✓ Academic areas in which the interpreter feels confident
- ✓ Study habits of the student

- ✓ Arrangements for tutoring
- ✓ How peer interaction will be interpreted (if the student wants peer interactions interpreted)
- ✓ How much fingerspelling the student can access
- ✓ Student's level of English literacy
- ✓ Student's interest in participating in school events
- ✓ Student and interpreter familiarity with staff and students
- ✓ Sign choices for specific academic concepts that do not have standard signs

Second year

In the second year, the interpreter and student will build on the contextual base of the previous year. The second year should prove to be smoother than the first year. The student is able to adjust to the new grade level and new teachers(s) without the added burden of adjusting to new signs and approaches from the interpreter. The interpreter knows the student's likes and dislikes and is familiar with that particular educational environment. They have established signs for various academic concepts and individuals in the setting. They have become more comfortable with each other. There may be situations where the problems described in the third year of the pairing will begin.

Third year

The interpreter and student are very familiar with each other and know how to elicit reactions from one another. This is especially true if the student is a teenager. They may find communication with adults, including the interpreter, to be annoying. The interpreter may begin to feel paternalistic about the student's success. An unhealthy dependence may begin to take root. The interpreter may continue to deal with the student as they did in sixth grade; however, an eighth grader is a significantly different student. The match may begin to break down. Many of the pitfalls described in the opening paragraph could begin to happen. Interpreters can take short cuts to student understanding instead of accurately reflecting the original message.

Fourth year and beyond

Interpreters continuing with a student for a fourth year is only useful if switching would cause undue hardship on the student. An example may be if the student is moving to high school and has had the same interpreter for three years. A new school is a big adjustment; a new interpreter is a big adjustment as well. If possible, avoid having the student deal with both of these events in the same year. There may be other situations that lead the administration to pair a student/interpreter for a fourth year, although it is not considered good for the student, nor for the interpreter in the long run.

Interpreter Assessment and Professional Development

Prior to Hiring a K–12 Interpreter

When a Local Education Agency (LEA) understands the importance of the interpreter in a student's education, they will only hire qualified individuals. Understanding the avenues to certification in the field of interpreting can be daunting. When embarking on the hiring process,

- Know the difference between certification and licensure,
- Know the certification and licensure requirements for K–12 interpreters in New Mexico,
- Learn as much as possible about applicants prior to hiring, and
- Have high standards for filling the position—the K–12 Interpreter is a critical position in the educational team.

When an LEA is reviewing applicants, the New Mexico School for the Deaf Outreach Department can provide assistance. Outreach Specialists can help an LEA understand the qualifications for the position or the set of qualifications an applicant presents.

Another useful tool for LEAs is a pre-hire screening offered by the EIPA Diagnostic Center at Boys Town National Research Hospital. This service provides a quick assessment to support districts in making hiring decisions—it is not a certification tool and cannot replace the full diagnostic the EIPA provides.

To learn more about the pre-hire screening, visit www.classroominterpreting.org/EIPA/prehire/index.asp

Ongoing Assessment of K–12 Interpreters

All members of the educational team have annual assessments and professional development plans. Often, K–12 interpreters are assessed on timeliness and professionalism. Certified and uncertified K–12 interpreters deserve quality feedback and opportunities for professional growth within their field. When establishing standards for K–12 interpreter assessment, it is crucial to provide observation and feedback by a qualified interpreter, interpreter trainer, or other qualified professional. There are multiple ways this can happen:

- Hire a qualified consultant to provide periodic on-site observation and feedback.
- Provide video feedback opportunities. This can happen through formal or informal, local or statewide mentoring programs.
- The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) provides comprehensive diagnostic information that can guide the development of a professional development plan. In addition, the EIPA score gives LEAs information about the certification level of a K–12 interpreter in New Mexico.

"Interpreters often work alone, and many times, no other interpreters are working at the school or even in the district. To help reduce this sense of isolation, interpreters should have the support from their school to seek appropriate professional development opportunities in which they can participate and learn from other interpreters who do the same work."

Marty M. Taylor, 2004. Assessment and Supervision of Educational Interpreters: What Job? Whose Job? Is This Process Necessary? Educational Interpreting How Can It Succeed? 9: 178–185.

Professional Development Ideas for K–12 Interpreters

Interact with Deaf Adults!

Do you always understand them?

Do they always understand you?

Do you understand them when they sign to each other?

Get (or Be) a Mentor!

New Mexico Mentoring—(NMCDHH.org) programs run twice yearly with the following curriculum:

- Voicing
- Preparing for Assignments
- Numbers and Fingerspelling
- Mental Health
- Medical
- Best Practices in K–12 Interpreting
- Classifiers (in progress at the time of publication)

Join Discussion Groups

- Use EIPA diagnostic results to work with your interpreter colleagues.
- Videotape yourselves and swap for discussion and feedback.
- Pick a topic or reading for weekly/monthly discussion.
- Create a book club and read relevant articles or books.
- Schedule signing suppers.

New Mexico School for the Deaf Professional Development

www.nmsd.k12.nm.us

ASL Immersion Week—annual summer opportunity for ASL instruction at all skill levels

Interpreter Week—annual summer skill development opportunity for working K–12 Interpreters

District-specific workshops on request

New Mexico Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf www.nmrid.com
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf www.rid.com

*NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct**

Tenets

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.

2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.

3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.

4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.

5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.

6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.

6. Interpreters engage in professional development.

*For an in-depth look at these tenets, please refer to the RID website: www.rid.org.

LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

LICENSURE	CERTIFICATION
The required endorsement by a licensing body for someone to earn money working as an interpreter	Recognition of an interpreter's skill level as determined by an approved assessment tool

State Licensure of K–12 Interpreters in New Mexico

In March 2007, New Mexico Legislature adopted interpreter licensure. In August 2008, the Sign Language Interpreting Practice Board was established. This legislation will allow five years for working K–12 Interpreters to attain certification/licensure. At the publication of this document, the Board and its Rules Sub-Committee is in the process of establishing the requirements for licensure of K–12 Interpreters. Once determined, state licensure standards for K–12 interpreters will drive the certification requirements set by the Public Education Department. For the latest information from the Sign Langugage Interpreting Practice Board, please visit the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department at www.rld.state.nm.us.

Certification of K–12 Interpreters in New Mexico

(as recognized by New Mexico's Public Education Department)

(1) Professional interpreter

(a) obtain certification from the national Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID); or

(b) obtain certification from the National Association for the Deaf (NAD) national interpreter certification at levels III, IV, or V;

(2) Education interpreter: Attain Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) levels 3.5 or above.

The PED certification requirements stated above are current at the publication of this document. Due to the status of interpreter licensure in New Mexico, these requirements are subject to change. Please refer to the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department at www.rld.state.nm.us for the most current information regarding certification and licensure.

What Certification Does and Does Not Tell Us

Tells Us….

The interpreter met a minimum standard on a given day using a signed language and spoken English.

May Tell Us…

- The interpreter's skill level in transliterating and/or interpreting in general
- Something about the interpreter's educational background
- Something about the interpreter's knowledge of interpreting theory and ethics on a given day

Does Not Tell Us if the Interpreter…

- Is a balanced bilingual.
- Has a background in or knowledge of child development.
- Has a background in or knowledge of education.
- Understands and follows the code of ethics.
- Is culturally sensitive to Deaf people and their experiences.
- Is a member of a professional organization.
- Is qualified to interpret a given subject area (e.g., calculus).
- Performs well in less a controlled, non-testing environment.

In Summary: Ten Items to Take Away

1. Not all students are ready to access their education through an interpreter.
2. An interactive and trained educational team is crucial for a successful interpreted education.
3. In order to predict how successful a student may or may not be using interpreting services, a broad scope of information must be gathered regarding student language and communication competencies and developmental skills.
4. Some students require supplemental supports, such as tutors or aides, to succeed in an interpreted environment.
5. K–12 interpreters must strategically lead students to be self-advocates and sophisticated users of interpreting services.
6. Students and interpreters benefit from a rotation that prevents long-term pairings.
7. In a fast-paced educational environment, interpreters must consider deference to the student in choosing which, of multiple messages, to interpret.
8. In order for the school experience to be accessible, each aspect of the school experience must be accessible, including hallway and playground discussions, social conversations, etc.
9. K–12 interpreters, regardless of their credentials, must be supported to seek ongoing professional development opportunities in the same way all other educational team members are expected to.
10. Those who hire K–12 interpreters understand the importance of the interpreter in a student's education and therefore, hire only qualified individuals.

RESOURCE LIST

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www.signs-of-development.org

www.rid.org

www.avlic.ca

www.classroominterpreting.org (EIPA)

www.apsea.ca

www.nad.org

For further information, or to request training related to the content in this document contact:

New Mexico School for the Deaf
Outreach Department
505.476.6400 (v/tty) or 800.841.6699 (v/tty)