

# TIPS FOR WORKING WITH LINGUISTIC INTERPRETERS

## *Do I need an Interpreter?*

Interpreters are trained to ensure that communication between sides is as clear as possible.

Interpreters help minimize misunderstandings.

Interpreters assist in overcoming cross-cultural matters.

*For more information about interpreters you may contact:*

The CCSD Interpretation and Translation Office:  
Anna McInroy  
720-554-5098.



Language Supports and Services:  
Office of Interpretation & Translation

1. **Introduce yourself.** This sets the stage for better communication across the language barrier.
2. **Look at and speak directly to the parents/guardians when speaking and not at the interpreter.** Use first person when speaking. Remember that you are communicating with the parents/guardians through an interpreter.
3. **Speak in short sentences, expressing one idea at a time.** Avoid long, complex sentences and do not use slang, jargon or idioms. (Some concepts may be easy for the interpreter to understand, but extremely difficult to interpret).
4. **One person should speak at a time.**
5. **Allow enough time for interpreted sessions.** Remember that an interpreted conversation requires more time. What can be said in a few words in one language may require a lengthy paraphrase in another.  
*\*Some concepts do not exist in the families' culture and may need detailed explanations in another language.\**
6. **Be patient and avoid interrupting during interpretation.** Allow the interpreter as much time as necessary to ask questions, for repeats, and for clarification. Be prepared to repeat yourself in different words if your message is not understood.
7. **Be sensitive to cultural communication patterns.** Different cultures have different protocols to discuss sensitive topics. Also remember that some English phrases may need to be relayed in different communication patterns.
8. **Hold a pre-session and debriefing with the interpreter.** Clarify unique vocabulary, seating arrangements, and other needs. Provide the interpreter with any written materials ahead of time. Explain important and or/difficult concepts and points.
9. **Expect everything you say to be interpreted, as well as everything the family says.** Don't ask or say anything that you don't want the parent/guardian to hear.
10. **Physically place yourself so that you are facing the parents/ guardians, and the parents/guardians are facing you.**