



# Practice Tip Sheet

## WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS



### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INTERPRETERS IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

An interpreter facilitates clear and accurate communication between professionals and families who are not fluent in the same language, ensuring that everyone understands and can fully participate in the early intervention process. Interpreters and translators are different: translators work with written text, while interpreters work with spoken and signed language. Some interpreters may also translate, but not always.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INTERPRETERS IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

- **Interpreters help to protect a family's rights:** They help to ensure families understand their rights and procedural safeguards so that they can give **informed consent** throughout the early intervention process.
- **Interpreters can serve as a cultural bridge:** They act as a conduit, clarifier and cultural broker between the Birth to 3 Program and the family so that families feel valued and understood. Cultural competency enhances practitioner understanding and promotes meaningful child and family engagement.
- **Interpreters facilitate active participation and continuity of care:** Effective communication ensures that everyone is on the same page and that families feel confident and competent participating in evaluations, meetings, assessments and ongoing service delivery.



*The importance of using a child and family's native language is paramount. It serves as the foundation for equitable access and genuine family engagement and ensures the integrity of the early intervention process.*

### WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT USING INTERPRETERS IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

Wisconsin Administrative Code - Dept. of Health Services, Chapter 90 includes multiple references to providing Part C services in the child and family's native language.



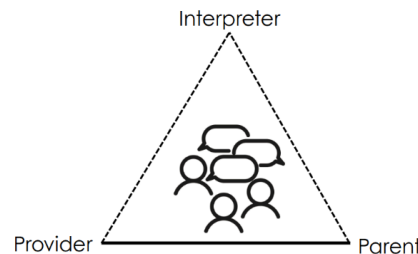
- Definition of native language
- Interpretation in the IFSP process
- Interpretation in assessment
- Consent and Prior Written Notice (PWN)

Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program Operations Guide



## HOW DO I USE AN INTERPRETER IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

- ✓ Talk to the parent, not the interpreter
- ✓ Only one speaker at a time for clear communication
- ✓ Pause periodically to check with the parent for understanding
- ✓ Use the interpreter as the communication bridge between you and the parent
- ✓ Avoid using acronyms, idioms and technical jargon that may be difficult to interpret
- ✓ Speak clearly and concisely with pauses that allow the interpreter to convey the message



### WHAT TYPES OF INTERPRETER SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

- **In-Person:** Face to face conversion of spoken or signed language
- **Virtual:** Use of a video platform for conversion of spoken or signed language
- **Telephonic:** Use of a phone service to connect people speaking different languages
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Use of machine based algorithms to analyze, understand, and convert text or speech from one language to another

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACCESSING INTERPRETERS IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION

- What is the availability of interpreters (directly employed or contracted) for common languages as well as less common languages in your area?
- Are there other local programs that could assist with accessing interpreters (universities, health care systems, community agencies)?
- What method of interpretation would be most effective for your program and for the families you serve? How does it align with the information shared in this tip sheet?
- What steps can your program and team take to ensure that families who need interpretation services receive the same level and quality of early intervention services as English-speaking families in your program?

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