

Dynamics of Interpretation

These suggestions and ideas can make the interpretation/translation process more successful.

Environment

- Make it comfortable and non-threatening.
- Limit the conference to a small number of people. Introductions are very important. Give name and position of each person present and what role each plays in relationship to the child.
- Seating arrangements are critical. The interpreter should not block off the parent from the school professional. Eye contact must be maintained among the participants. The school professional should address him/herself directly to the parent.
- Assume the parent may understand more than that for which s/he may give himself/herself credit.

Timing

- Give parents a time reference.
- The use of an interpreter requires extra time. Plan the conference accordingly.

Listening

- All school personnel should maintain a responsive posture and their attention. Body language can cue the school personnel to ask relevant questions.

Values/Attitudes

- Be aware of the attitude you display. It often sets the tone of the conference.

Heterogeneity of language/culture

- Parents may be different even though they are from the same ethnic group. Avoid stereotyping and be sensitive to individual differences.
- Type of language may vary within an ethnic group depending on several factors such as education and experience.

Recording

- Determine some system of note taking or recording.

Authority

- The school personnel are ultimately responsible for the conference, procedure, information sharing, content, and intent.
- The interpreter should not “editorialize” comments made by any of the school personnel or by the parent.
- Remember to remain neutral.
- Present as a united team.



Closing remarks

- The school professional in charge should make the closing remarks, summarize, ask final questions, discuss follow-up, and reassure parents.