

Using Translating and Interpreting Services in Early Childhood Services

'Developing inclusive assessment practices with children and their families demonstrates respect for diversity, helps educators make better sense of what they have observed and supports learning for both children and adults.'

(EYLF: p.17)

Things to consider

- It is important not to make assumptions about a person's capacity to understand and communicate in English.
- Some newly arrived communities may not have had the opportunity or access to education so may not be literate in their first language – therefore their English literacy may also be limited.
- Slow down and simplify your use of language rather than raising your voice with people whose first language is not English.
- If a family cannot speak English well, or is experiencing difficulty communicating in English it is strongly recommended that a telephone interpreter or other suitable interpreter be used.
- If you need to use a face to face interpreter consider the gender, ethnicity and language/dialect of the interpreter. For example, it may be inappropriate to provide a male interpreter for a female family member.

What is the difference between interpreters and translators?

- **Interpreters** are those who orally restate in one language what has been said in another language.
- **Translators** are those who convert the written materials from one language to another.

When to use professional translating and interpreting services

Professional interpreters are bilingual, their language and interpreting skills have been tested, they are trained and they operate under a strict code of professional ethics which ensures that their services are impartial and confidential. It is essential to use professional interpreters:

- When conveying important or sensitive information about health issues, entitlements, rights and responsibilities or seeking informed consent, when your family member identifies that language is a barrier to communicating effectively.
- If the service requires important documents such as birth certificates, immunisation records in English, a family may need to have them translated. Some government services such as Centrelink will translate documents if relevant for their service provision.

When to use non-professional interpreters

Non-professional interpreters such as relatives or friends should only be used for conveying general information regarding routine needs or day to day issues of your service. The use of non-professionals could result in a breach of confidentiality, they may not be impartial, they could have an emotional involvement and tend to filter information, their language ability may be limited, and particularly in complex situations, there is no guarantee of impartiality or professionalism. Do not use children as interpreters.

If a family requires an interpreter for the enrolment process a professional interpreter or a bilingual staff member must be used.

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)



13 14 50

Tip Sheet 4

Tips for effectively using telephone interpreters

- ▶ Do you have your TIS registration code, job number and the name of the booked interpreter at hand?
- ▶ Check you have a speaker phone, dual handset or dual head set.
- ▶ Ask for the family member's name, write it out as spoken as well as how it is spelt.
- ▶ Ask for the family member's relationship to the child.
- ▶ Have a quiet area to conduct the interview and ensure the customer's privacy.
- ▶ Brief the interpreter – clarify the background and objective of the interview.
- ▶ Listen carefully and avoid using slang or jargon.
- ▶ Speak directly to the family member.
- ▶ Use two to three short sentences then let the interpreter speak.
- ▶ Write the important things down and check for clarification as you go.
- ▶ Allow sufficient time.
- ▶ Always check that the family member has understood what has been said before you move on to the next thing.

Quick Checklist

- Have you checked if the family members require a professional interpreter?
- Have you accurately identified the relevant language and dialect?
- Have you checked if the family members require written notifications, correspondence and/or information in their first language?
- Have you arranged for an interpreter and/or written translations?

How can I access TIS?

The National Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) available 24 hours a day 7 days a week for any person or organisation in Australia requiring interpreting services. Fees do apply.

See website for more information and downloadable resources including *need an interpreter* cards.

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/help_with_translating/

Penrith City Council Childcare Services have a code to access **free TIS services** – check with your local ISA office on:

Phone: 02 4732 7843 or

Email: isa@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

Useful Resources

Centrelink Multicultural Training Products

Range of resources developed to assist professionals and customer service staff who have culturally diverse clientele. Resources include:

- Working with Interpreters DVD
- Multicultural Customer Service Training CD ROM
- A guide to Ethnic Naming Practices

Phone: 02 8512 0827

Email: multicultural.services.nat@centrelink.gov.au

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