



Coaching

Using An Interpreter

Interpreters have a vital role to support communication between providers and caregivers. Providers must clearly understand their own role and how to successfully use coaching while working with an interpreter. Consider these tips when communicating through an interpreter.

Tips from an interpreter for ensuring a successful interaction. Clearly explain how the program works to caregivers and the importance of their role. Share enough information with the interpreter prior to the visit so they will be prepared. Give the interpreter time to explain to the caregiver that the interpreter is only the voice for the conversation.

Look at the caregiver rather than the interpreter when talking. Ask if the caregiver speaks any English and let them know it is ok if they want to ask or respond in English.

Questions:

- Ask the interpreter to share questions and statements exactly as asked unless the words do not exist in the language being interpreted or the phrasing of the question does not interpret well.
- Explain to the interpreter that you will be asking open-ended questions that cannot be answered with yes/no.
- Use simple phrasing or fewer words when asking open-ended questions.
- Use specific language (e.g. “what do you think about what I’m saying?” rather than “what do you think about that?”

Word Choices:

- The interpreter may need to hear the entire question or statement, rather than simultaneously interpreting, to understand what the provider is saying and the intent.
- If a word carries a different meaning between the languages, the interpreter should ask the provider for clarification.
- The provider and interpreter should discuss similar words that carry the same meaning and include the caregiver in as much of the discussion as possible.
- When medical terms need to be used, plan with interpreter prior to the visit to allow for easier interpretation.

Parent Cues:

- Be aware of the caregiver's facial expressions and body language to inform you of their understanding of questions or statement.
- Adjust your level of speech as needed for the caregivers.
- Rephrase what is being asked when the wording is too technical.