**Communicating Through Language Interpreters at IEP Meetings**

**During the IEP Meeting: Tips for Communicating through an Interpreter**

1. **Use first person when speaking.** Trained interpreters will use first person when interpreting. Therefore, there is no need to say, “Tell the mom that I would like her to help her student with his homework.”

2. **Avoid eye contact with the interpreter.** The speaker should look directly at the person he/she is addressing.

3. **Say what an acronym stands for the first time you use it.** Trained interpreters will first interpret the words that make up the acronym, and then will add that those words are referred to by its English acronym, and from that point on, the speaker may use only the acronym.
   
   For example:
   
   *This is Juan’s initial Individualized Education (IEP) Plan meeting.*
   
   *Please initial here if you agree to all parts of the IEP.*

4. **Use nonprofessional terms** whenever possible to facilitate meaningful communication.

5. **Avoid idioms, slang, double-meaning words or phrases, and jokes.**

6. **Do not engage in side conversations.**

7. **Pause frequently** if the interpreter is using simultaneous mode. If interpreter is using consecutive mode, stop after one or two sentences to allow interpreter to render the message.

8. If an IEP team member **addresses the parents in their native language**, the interpreter will render the message in English.

9. **Support your interpreter** whenever he/she makes any requests (for example, to take a break, to express discomfort with the issue under discussion, to ask how to proceed when a parent is not pleased with the interpretation, etc.). A trained interpreter should not address the parent directly during the meeting.

10. **Periodically ask the parent questions to establish that they understand the content of the communication.**

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