



## WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS

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Deaf  
Children  
Australia.



# WHEN YOU'RE INCLUDING DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING (DHH) CHILDREN IN YOUR ACTIVITIES, THERE MAY BE TIMES YOU WANT TO WORK WITH AN INTERPRETER. HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF IT.

## Meet the interpreter beforehand

If possible, try to meet the interpreter before your appointment or event. This gives you a chance to go over names or terms you might use, any signs you've developed, or other information that might give the interpreter more context.

## Make sure the child can see the interpreter

It's important for the DHH child or young person to have a clear, direct view of the interpreter. The interpreter should sit or stand directly in front of the child.

In a small group, try to have the children sitting in a circle or semi-circle rather than a theatre-style arrangement.

## Provide good lighting

Good lighting helps the child see the interpreter clearly. If you need to dim or turn off the lights, make sure the child can still see the interpreter.

## Talk directly to the child

It can be hard to know who to talk to when you're working with an interpreter. It's best to maintain eye contact with the DHH person and speak directly to them. Avoid directing comments (such as 'Tell him...' or 'Ask her...') to the interpreter.

## Speak naturally

Speak at your normal pace. The interpreter will ask you to slow down or repeat something if needed.

## Let one person speak at a time

An interpreter can only interpret one speaker at a time.

## Ask the child if they are following the conversation

It's a good idea to check in now and then to make sure the child is understanding the conversation.

## Avoid saying anything you do not want interpreted

The interpreter will interpret everything they hear. Do not ask them to leave out any part of the conversation.

## Avoid asking the interpreter for an opinion or comment

Interpreters follow a code of ethics and must be impartial in every setting. Avoid asking them questions like what they thought of a meeting or the content of your conversation.

## Give them a short break every hour

Interpreting is mentally and physically demanding. Do not expect the interpreter to interpret during their breaks.



For further information about  
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Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf'  
to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.  
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