



New York City Administration for Children's Services
150 William Street
New York, New York 10038

Ronald E. Richter
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

DATE: *April 23, 2012*

TO: All Children's Services Staff

FROM: Ronald E. Richter 

SUBJECT: **Interpretation Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children and Family Members (Replaces 8/9/11 Memorandum)**

This memorandum replaces the August 9, 2011 Memorandum with the same subject line.

Whenever Children's Services staff interact with a child or family member who is deaf or hearing impaired, we must arrange for and provide sign language interpretation services so that our communication is effective for the child and his/her family. To do so is, of course, good case practice. We are also mandated to do so by federal, state and local law.

In particular, sign language interpretation services are to be provided for children and/or family members who are deaf or hearing impaired during all conferences, meetings, Family Team and Permanency Planning Conferences, sibling visits, family visits and all casework contacts, whether these interactions occur at Children's Services offices or in the family's home.¹ Children's Services shall assess each case so that appropriate accommodations are being provided. Such assessments shall occur during each interview, meeting, conference or discussion, and shall be ongoing throughout the life of a case.

A person may not be denied services due to his or her inability to communicate with Children's Services staff. Children's Services staff must inform the hearing impaired person that interpretation services are available and that such services are free.

Making Arrangements for Interpretation Services

Children's Services has retained a sign language interpretation provider for circumstances where such services are needed and when:

¹ Sign language interpretation for families receiving foster care services (with exceptions noted within) should be obtained via the foster care provider as outlined in the Children's Services Memorandum addressed to foster care agencies, entitled, "Interpretation Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children and Family Members," dated March 13, 2007.

1. Children's Services maintains case management and case planning responsibility;² and/or
2. Children's Services staff is convening a meeting or initiating the need for a meeting or discussion.³

If an individual, client, or family member is identified as having a hearing impairment, ACS staff shall call the interpretation liaison for his or her division, or Borough Office, to arrange for interpretation services, unless, for cases not within the Division of Child Protection (DCP),⁴ the individual has indicated that he or she will be bringing his or her own interpreter. **In DCP cases, DCP staff may not rely on children, family members, friends, or neighbors for interpretation during interviews and family meetings. Except in certain emergency situations as discussed below, in DCP cases, DCP staff must make arrangements for sign language interpretation services for all interviews, home visits and family meetings.**

In cases not in the Division of Child Protection (DCP), the child and/or individual family member who is deaf or hearing impaired is entitled to use his or her own sign language interpreter where the interpreter is at least 18 years of age if:

1. He or she chooses to do so after being informed that sign language interpretation services will be provided free of charge; and
2. Reliance on the outside interpreter is appropriate under the circumstances.

In all situations, the family must be notified that ACS will provide sign language interpretation services free of charge.

In DCP cases, to arrange for sign language interpretation services, DCP staff shall utilize the procedures set forth in the DCP memorandum entitled, "Face-To-Face Interpretation, Telephonic and Translation Services," dated October 22, 2007. In cases not in DCP, to arrange for sign language interpretation services and for inquiries regarding the provision of services to deaf and hearing impaired individuals, ACS staff may contact their division's interpretation liaison, as listed in Attachment A. (For DCP cases, DCP also has a liaison for assistance and inquiries, if necessary, as listed in Attachment A). If the interpretation liaison for a particular division or Borough Office is not available, the liaison shall indicate in his or her out of office messages (email and voicemail) who the alternate liaison is for their division or Borough Office. Upon being notified that the primary liaison is not available, ACS staff shall contact the alternate liaisons for their division or Borough Office. Interpretation liaisons may contact the Division of Administrative Services regarding any complications in arranging sign language interpretation services directly or through your Borough Office Liaison, and to secure the required vouchers that must be completed.⁵

² E.g., Family Services Units and Specialized Care Units within DCP.

³ As in the case of an Independent Review or interviews initiated by Children's Services' Agency Program Assistance (APA).

⁴ Such as in the Division of Child Care/Head Start, Division of Youth and Family Justice, or any other ACS Division where Children's Services staff is engaging an individual, client, or family member identified as having a hearing impairment.

⁵ As of the date of this memorandum, Dee Parbhudial, Division of Administration, may be contacted at 212-341-8910 or at Dgawanti.parbhudial@dfa.state.ny.us Furthermore, if a division other than DCP

Documentation

All steps taken to request sign language interpretation services shall be documented in the progress notes in CONNECTIONS (CNNX) or in the record-keeping system that is required by ACS staff who do not use CNNX to maintain their records. This documentation shall include all efforts to obtain a sign language interpreter, even if such efforts are unsuccessful. Staff who utilize CNNX and who are entering information into CNNX regarding an individual who requires sign language interpretation shall confirm whether the primary language is American Sign Language and, if so, verify that the primary language field in CNNX indicates that American Sign Language is the primary language. Feedback, if any is received, from the clients regarding the effectiveness of the sign language interpretation shall be documented as well, and should also be shared with the division's Central Interpretation Coordinator where warranted and appropriate (e.g., if a client reports difficulty in understanding a particular interpreter, this should be reported to the Central Interpretation Coordinator). In cases not in DCP, staff shall document in their respective record-keeping system situations where a family has opted to utilize its own interpreter.

Special Considerations for Division of Child Protection Investigations

DCP staff must arrange to have a sign language interpreter present for all home visits, and for all other planned interactions with the family, when staff is aware that a child and/or family member is deaf or hearing impaired.

If it is known that a family will require sign language interpretation services prior to an initial home visit, DCP staff, including Emergency Children's Services (ECS) staff, shall exercise all reasonable efforts to secure sign language interpretation services, even in a situation that is deemed to require an immediate home visit (or which requires DCP to take immediate action). If DCP has identified a situation which requires an immediate home visit (or other immediate action), the sign language interpretation provider has agreed to make every effort to provide an interpreter as soon as possible.

However, if the nature of the case allegations calls for an initial home visit sooner than interpretation services can be provided, DCP staff must proceed to make the initial home visit immediately to assess safety and risk. If there is insufficient time to obtain a sign language interpreter for the initial home visit, or if it was unknown that a sign language interpreter was needed, other forms of communication can be utilized, such as writing or by using a video remote interpreting services (for families that already have this service installed in their home). The video remote interpreting service is a form of video-conferencing service that will help DCP staff communicate with the family.

When a DCP staff member does not know in advance of the home visit that the client is deaf and/or hearing impaired, DCP staff shall provide clients notice of the availability of a sign

utilizes the sign language interpretation contract that is currently administered by DCP, it is that division's budget which will have the fiscal responsibility for any and all sign language interpretation services, as arranged by that division and DCP.

language interpreter by showing the client a typographical symbol for an interpreter as soon as the initial contact with the client is made. DCP staff should therefore have the language card available during home visits so the client can be shown the symbol on the card.

DCP staff must make arrangements for sign language interpretation services for any and all subsequent home visits, or other planned interactions with the family. This includes situations in which there is also a provider agency involved in the case. Accordingly, in situations where DCP and a provider agency are to be present for a planned visit or other interaction with the family, DCP shall be responsible for providing the sign language interpreter.

Please be advised that most DCP borough offices are equipped with Teletypewriter (TTY) devices which connect a hearing-impaired individual with a service provider via a specific telephone typewriting intermediary, and are available for use by Children's Services staff when needed. TTY devices should be used for telephone conversations only.

ATTACHMENT A

Deaf and Hearing Impaired Interpretation Coordinators (April 2012)							
	Program Area	Primary Liaison	Phone #	Email	Alternate Liaison	Phone #	Email
1.	Administration	Dee Parbhudial	212-341-8910	Dgawanti.parbhudial@dfa.state.ny.us	Sandra Marcelino	212-341-9014	Sandra.marcelino@dfa.state.ny.us
2.	Child Care/Head Start	Andrea Glenn	212-361-6250	Andrea.glenn@dfa.state.ny.us	Yvonne Burgess	212-361-6257	Burgesyl@acs.nyc.gov
3.	Child Protection	Jocelyn Jean-Phillippe	212-341-3257	Jocelyn.jean-phillippe@dfa.state.ny.us	Jocelyn Jean-Phillippe Fernando Lorence (ECS-After Hours)	212-341-3257 646-935-1426	Jocelyn.jean-phillippe@dfa.state.ny.us Fernando.lorence2@dfa.state.ny.us
4.	Family Court Legal Services	Ray Kimmelman	212-341-3127	Ray.kimmelman@dfa.state.ny.us	Nancy Thomson	212-341-2713	Nancy.thomson@dfa.state.ny.us
5.	Family Permanency Services	Steven Bieber	212-676-7480	Steven.bieber@dfa.state.ny.us	Kathleen Owens	212-676-7397	Kathleen.owens@dfa.state.ny.us
6.	Family Support Services	Mark Lewis	212-676-9017	Mark.lewis@dfa.state.ny.us	Kellian Gould	212-227-3497	Kellian.gould@dfa.state.ny.us
7.	Financial Services	Annette Gordon	212-341-3594	Annette.gordon@dfa.state.ny.us	Julie Zuckerbraun	212- 227-6258	Julie.Zuckerbraun@dfa.state.ny.us
8.	General Counsel	Judy Tsang	212-788-5727	Judy.tsang@dfa.state.ny.us	Michael Rosenblum	212-341-2711	Michael.rosenblum@dfa.state.ny.us
9.	Policy, Planning & Measurement	Sydney McSweeney	212-676-6937	Sydney.mcsweeney@dfa.state.ny.us	Melody Grissom	212-341-2848	Melody.grissom@dfa.state.ny.us
10.	Youth and Family Justice ¹	Rhonda Moore	718-292-0065	Rhonda.moore@acs.nyc.gov	Tyrone Washington	718-292-0065	Tyrone.washington@dfa.state.ny.us

¹ DYFJ staff should refer to Administrative Order #01/08 entitled "Use of the Teletypewriter Machine" for additional guidance.