

ENROLMENT

Working with an Interpreter

An Interpreter is engaged in a three-way communication. He or she will communicate in English and another language between two or more parties to facilitate simple communication in their non-occupational role.

Language is not neutral. It reflects the values and knowledge of the people using it and can reinforce both negative and positive perceptions about other people.

When enrolling a child from an Aboriginal or culturally and linguistically diverse background with the support of an interpreter, additional considerations are essential to ensure that you, as the service provider, and the family, exchange the information required for the safe and appropriate care and education of the child.

Information exchange on the following considerations can have a significant impact on the successful transition of a child from an Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse background into child care:

- Care and education expectations.
- Behavioural expectations and discipline.
- Child's attachment and separation experiences.
- Interactions and norms between family and child/ren.
- Communication styles (verbal and non-verbal).
- Customs/Traditions/Religion.
- Societal Norms on physical appearance/social interactions.

Creating the right environment for a three way conversation requires dedication and practice. Following recommendations will give you optimum ability to achieve outcomes.

Preparing for the enrolment meeting:

- Allow extra time for the interview.
- Ensure that all participants are available for the session and that you have an appropriate meeting space available.
- Identify what you want to cover during the session/s such as:
 - Processes, policies that need explaining.
 - Forms and permissions that need signing.
 - Questions you and your staff have that pertain to the care of the child.
 - Establishment of routines and communication between your service and the family.
- Have relevant documents and information at hand for the meeting.
- Provide the interpreter with general information relating to enrolling a child in a child care service before the interview.

Face to Face interpreting

- Arrange a private space that allows the interpreter to sit alongside both you and the person enrolling the child. You should sit opposite the person enrolling the child.

Phone interpreting

- Let the interpreter know what your set-up is (speaker phone, single or dual-handset phone, describe the room and how many people are in the room).

During the enrolment meeting:

- Tell the person enrolling the child that information discussed is handled confidentially and only matters used for the care and education of the child will be shared with appropriate personnel (e.g. the child care worker).
- Speak directly to the person enrolling the child NOT to the interpreter.
- Everything that is said during the enrolment must be interpreted.
- Always remember that you are the person leading the enrolment process – not the interpreter.
- Do not request cultural information from the interpreter - rather, ask the person enrolling through the interpreter.

Face to Face interpreting

- Allow the interpreter to introduce themselves to you and the person enrolling the child.
- Interpreters do not fill out any written parts of the enrolment form but can be asked to write down key words or notices that will support your ongoing communication strategy with family/carer and child.

Phone interpreting

- Introduce yourself and the interpreter to the client and describe the purpose of the meeting.
- Limit your communication to short sections of information.
- Pause often to allow the interpreter to speak.
- Keep in mind that telephone interpreters rely entirely on what is said. They have no visual cues (such as body language) to assist in their interpreting.
- Clearly indicate the end of the session to the interpreter.

After the enrolment meeting:

- It is not recommended that the client and interpreter leave at the same time to clearly delineate that the meeting is finished and avoid the informal continuation of discussions.
- After the meeting, you may seek feedback from the interpreter if necessary.

REFERENCES

1. http://www.equity.qut.edu.au/publications/publications/equity_publications/Working_with_Diversity_2006.pdf
2. http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/Languages/language_services_2008.pdf
3. http://ceh.org.au/downloads/ass_need_interpreter.pdf