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School Interpreters - How to Get One for Your Child

If you think your child needs an interpreter at school, help your IEP team plan for getting one.

Does your child go to school with mostly hearing children? He may need an interpreter. Read our page on [school interpreters](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/information/school/help/interpreter.jsp) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/information/school/help/interpreter.jsp>) to find out how one can help you.

Ask your child IEP team for an interpreter

At your child's IEP meeting, ask your child's IEP team to include an interpreter in your child's IEP. If they agree, the school should then find and hire an interpreter. You shouldn't have to pay for one.

Make sure your child's IEP includes:

- **What kind of interpreter you want.** Like an ASL interpreter, a SEE transliterator, a Cued Speech transliterator, or something else.
- **When your child needs the interpreter.** Like during classes, during school assemblies and/or field trips.
- **How long your child needs the interpreter.** Like for part of the year, or during the whole year.

If the school can't find an interpreter

There aren't enough interpreters for all the children who need them. So your child's school may have trouble finding one. If your school is having trouble, ask them to contact these people:

- [Schools for the deaf](http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/schools-usa.html) (<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/schools-usa.html>) and teachers of the deaf. Your school should ask them who the best educational interpreters in your area are.
- [State offices for the deaf and hard of hearing](http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/501.pdf) (<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/501.pdf>). (This list also includes offices that help deaf people get jobs and learn job skills.) Sometimes people who work in these offices can also test interpreters.
- The [National Association of the Deaf \(NAD\)](http://www.nad.org/) (<http://www.nad.org/>)
- The [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf \(RID\)](http://www.rid.org/) (<http://www.rid.org/>)
- [State groups for the deaf](http://www.nad.org/openhouse/affiliates/SAs.html) (<http://www.nad.org/openhouse/affiliates/SAs.html>)

How can I tell if my child has a good interpreter?

So your school has agreed to give your child an interpreter. Great! But maybe your child says that he can't understand the interpreter. Here's how you can find out how good the interpreter is:

- **Meet with the interpreter.** Ask her how much training she's had.
- **Watch the interpreter in the classroom.** Does your child seem to understand what the interpreter is signing?
- **Look at how many years of school the interpreter has had.** For example, let's say your child is taking Calculus. But the interpreter has only learned Algebra. Then the interpreter might not be able to interpret everything well if she doesn't understand the class well herself.
- **Ask your school for an interpreter evaluation.** This means hiring someone to see how good a job your child's interpreter is doing. To do this, first talk to the director of special education in your school district. Then, if they can't find one, refer them to the same groups and people [as above](#).

Learn more about school interpreters

- Read "[Interpreting](http://www.netac.rit.edu/publication/tipsheet/interpreting.html)" from the Northeast Technical Assistance Center.
- Read these [articles on interpreting in schools](http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/Odyssey/Winter-Spring2001/index.html).

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You can find this page online at:

<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/information/rights/school/interpreter.jsp>