

A Sample Case

An interpreter is called to interpret for a psychologist who is Deaf and speaks English, uses sign, and is able to communicate dependably in 1-1 situations, but benefits from interpretation in group settings. The psychologist is doing assessments on pre-schoolers with hearing loss to develop a report for the educational team to make a determination about appropriate services. On the first day, the interpreter meets the psychologist and a hearing teacher of the D/HH at a local pre-school center. The first location for assessment is on the playground. The psychologist asks the interpreter to follow the student around the playground and interpret any language or sounds that the student uses - as well as how other students or teachers interact with the student. The student begins to interact with the interpreter - and with a quick glance to the psychologist to make sure it is acceptable - has some direct interaction with the student. The interpreter, in talking with the student, uses both voice and sign. After a few minutes, the teacher of the D/HH joins the play and engages the student in communication. The interpreter shifts back into interpreting what the student and teacher are talking about. The psychologist thanks the interpreter for being willing to engage with the student because it helped elicit better samples of language than the psychologist had been able to see previously.

Later, the psychologist does some direct assessments with the student that does not require interpreting services. The interpreter waits in the lobby and uses his computer to work on other projects while waiting to interpret for a team meeting. During this time, the interpreter and psychologist have a conversation about her experiences with other interpreters and how they function compared to what she experienced on this day. The interpreter explains briefly that there is a shift in paradigm in how interpreters are approaching work in the classroom and he hopes that she will find more interpreters who are working in a way that focuses more on meeting the needs of the student rather than focusing on following a certain role. Once the meeting starts, the interpreter asks the psychologist to introduce him and has to interject occasionally about his timeline related to a prior commitment. Other than that, the interpreter functions to interpret the comments of those involved.

The next day, the interpreter provides services for a team meeting for another student. The interpreter functions in the same way as the previous meeting until the discussion turns to the potential of providing language services for student and whether to advocate for an interpreter or a language facilitator. The psychologist and teacher of the D/HH are explaining to the team that the interpreter role precludes an interpreter from being able to really be a language model, and so it might be better to have a language facilitator used. In this discussion, they seem somewhat unsure of how to explain the distinction. The teacher of the D/HH, who knows that the interpreter also serves as a consultant for interpreter education in educational settings, says that the interpreter could probably clarify it and wonders if it would be okay to ask the him. All eyes turn toward the interpreter who asks the psychologist if she minds his sharing. She welcomes his input, and he explains about the changing paradigm of interpreting in educational settings - as well as some local resources that might be worth considering. For the parent who is in attendance, he shares an email and phone number for someone leading a group for families with deaf children. The interpreter then shifts back into enacting the role of interpreting for the comments of the participants in the meeting until it is concluded.