

Ethics in Interpretation Discussion Questions

Introduction

At times, interpreters may face situations where it is not always clear on how to best support the families and educator and what the role of an interpreter may allow.

Below are several scenarios interpreters may find themselves navigating.

These scenarios were developed by educators and family support organizations and intended to be used for discussion during the interpreter training. These scenarios can also be taken back to schools for interpreters and educators to discuss so they are best prepared for supporting families in interpreted IEP meetings.

Preparing Prior to or Beginning a Meeting

1. You don't know the family. How can you build trust before the meeting? During the meeting?
2. How do you explain your role as an interpreter regarding what you can do for the parent and what an interpreter will not be able to do for the parent?
3. How do you establish a signal for how the parent and interpreter will check in with each other during a meeting to ensure understanding?
4. You know the family and they rely on you for information from the school. How do you explain your changing roles (ex: interpreting IEP meeting)?
5. What visual supports could you bring to the IEP team prior to the meeting which you could then use to assist the parent?

Processes throughout a Meeting

6. How do you check for understanding with the parent throughout the meeting?
7. You are interpreting at an IEP meeting and you know the answer to a question the parent is asking. Can you answer the parent or do you ask the question for the parent?
8. What do you do when a parent asks you what "you" think they (the parent) should do?
9. If the interpreter for the IEP meeting was also an interpreter for the student for an assessment for eligibility, how should the interpreter switch the role of interpreting at an IEP meeting to sharing information as part of the IEP team?

Issues that Arise During a Meeting

10. What do you do when parents or parent/student begin to argue? What if the parent says very negative things about a teacher or program? Are there situations you do NOT interpret?
11. What do you do if you do not understand a word to translate?
12. What do you do if you feel the pace, emotions, or language of the discussion is outside your abilities to interpret?
13. What if you feel you can explain the IEP process or a service in the IEP better than the IEP team member for whom you are interpreting?
14. What if you feel there is not a good comfort level or there is a lack of trust between you and the parent? What would you do?