



Individual Education Plans and Individual Family Service Plans (IEP and IFSP)

This document is for informational purposes only regarding the use of Related Services within IEP/IFSPs. This information is geared specifically towards Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) children and those with American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary language or support language. The following information about IEPs has been gathered from the following sites (www2.ed.gov, www3.gallaudet.edu and <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enm020>).

The US Department of Education states:

Each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Each IEP must be designed for one student and must be a truly *individualized* document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability.

Special education and related services. The IEP must list the special education and related services to be provided to the child or on behalf of the child. This includes supplementary aids and services that the child needs. It also includes modifications (changes) to the program or supports for school personnel-such as training or professional development-that will be provided to assist the child.

Special Factors To Consider (pertinent to D/HH and others with communication needs)

Depending on the needs of the child, the IEP team needs to consider what the law calls special factors. These include:

- If the child has *communication needs*, the IEP team must consider those needs.
- If the child is *deaf or hard of hearing*, the IEP team will consider his or her language and communication needs. This includes the child's opportunities to communicate directly with classmates and school staff in his or her usual method of communication (for example, sign language).
- The IEP team must always consider the child's need for *assistive technology* devices or services.

Statement of the Special Education and Related Services, Supplementary Aids and Services, Program Modifications, and Supports For School Personnel--34 CFR §300.347(a)(3)

"The IEP for each child with a disability must include... a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child

"(i) To advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals;

"(ii) To be involved and progress in the general curriculum in accordance with 34 CFR §300.347(a)(1) and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and

" (iii) To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the activities described in this section;"



Related Services

A child may require any of the following related services in order to benefit from special education. Related services, as listed under IDEA, include (but are not limited to):

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- Audiology services
- Counseling services
- Early identification and assessment of disabilities in children
- Medical services
- Occupational therapy
- Orientation and mobility services
- Parent counseling and training
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Recreation
- Rehabilitation counseling services
- School health services
- Social work services in schools
- Speech-language pathology services
- Transportation

If a child needs a particular related service in order to benefit from special education, the related service professional should be involved in developing the IEP. He or she may be invited by the school or parent to join the IEP team as a person "with knowledge or special expertise about the child."

If a child needs a particular related service in order to benefit from special education, the related service professional should be involved

(iv) Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode; and

(v) Consider whether the child requires assistive technology devices and services.

For references and resources, please go to this link:

<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html#process>

U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education wrote a letter on November 12, 2014 which states:

Students with disabilities, like all students, must be provided the opportunity to fully participate in our public schools. A critical aspect of participation is communication with others. We have enclosed a document, entitled "**Frequently Asked Questions on Effective Communication for Students with Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools**" (FAQs), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-fags-effective-communication-201411.pdf> which explains the responsibility of public schools to ensure that communication with students with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities is as effective as communication with all other students.

For references and resources, please go to this link:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-fags-effective-communication-201411.pdf>



The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education states in the following article:

Frequently Asked Questions on Effective Communication for Students with Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools

3. What does it mean for a public school district to give “primary consideration” to the request of the student with a disability when making the decision to provide a particular auxiliary aid or service?

Answer. The Title II regulations require that when a public school is deciding what types of auxiliary aids and services are necessary to ensure effective communication, it must give “primary consideration” to the particular auxiliary aid or service requested by the person with the disability. (28 C.F.R. § 35.160(b)(2) When determining what is appropriate for that student, the school must provide an opportunity for the person with the disability (or an appropriate family member, such as a parent or guardian) to request the aid or service the student with a disability thinks is needed to provide effective communication. It is the person with the disability (or his or her appropriate family member) who is most familiar with his or her disability and can provide relevant information about which aids or services will be most effective

For references and resources, please go to this link:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-fags-effective-communication-201411.pdf>

**The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education states in an article:
What Really Matters in the Early Literacy Development of Deaf Children**

Language acquisition is critical for all Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, because language is the gateway to learning and literacy. “Many deaf children have delays in their face-to-face language development which can negatively affect literacy learning” (Mayer, 2007).

Connie Mayer; What Really Matters in the Early Literacy Development of Deaf Children, *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, Volume 12, Issue 4, 1 October 2007, Pages 411–431, <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enm020>

Gallaudet University’s Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center states in an article:

Frequently Asked Questions: Considerations for Using an ASL and Spoken English Bilingual Approach with Young Children who are Deaf and Hard Hrg

Regardless of which language families choose as the primary language, based on the evidence the use of American Sign Language and a spoken language English bilingual approach is essential for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to gain full access to language as early as possible. This in turn will facilitate development of linguistic competence and avoid language delays.

This approach, which facilitates both ASL and spoken English early in a child’s linguistic development, has the potential to promote and safeguard language acquisition through both visual and auditory modalities.

For references and resources, please go to these links:

<http://www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/info-to-go/language-and-communication/faq-asl-spoken-english.html>
and
<http://www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/info-to-go/language-and-communication/faq-references-and-resources.html>



What is SignOn and how can it benefit my family:

SignOn is an immersive virtual learning platform that connects ASL learners with our Deaf ASL Ambassadors via **live**, two-way 30 minute online sessions. SignOn provides American Sign Language Learners an easily-accessible online tool to practice one-on-one with Deaf individuals to enhance and improve ASL skills through a virtual immersion program.

SignOn works with families with young children, students in K-12, college and universities on their receptive and expressive skills. Our sessions increase signing confidence significantly with improved practice, streamlined language techniques and exposure to numerous signing styles. Readily available access to the Deaf Community greatly enriches the ASL learning experience and leads to authentic communication.

All of our Ambassadors have gone through multiple trainings, screenings and a thorough background check. Our training includes learning how to use the platform appropriately for every level of learner, from no ASL knowledge to an advanced signer. Our screening include the requirements of ASLPI (American Sign Language Proficiency Interview) scores of 3+ or higher, ASL teaching experience, and a rigorous interview process. Our background check includes *SSN Trace + Associated Counties, National Criminal Databases Search, Sex Offender List Search, Domestic Terrorist Watch List Search, and 7-Year County Criminal Court Search*.

Evidence based information about the benefits of having a Deaf Mentor:

Studies and surveys have shown that families with a D/HH child that have a Deaf Mentor (i.e. SignOn's Deaf ASL Ambassadors) and work with them on a regular basis have a positive impact on their lives.

Some of these findings include:

- Improved Language skills in both the parents and the child.
- The D/HH child is achieving milestones at the expected rate and time.
- Families are embracing Deaf culture, participating in the Deaf community and attending Deaf events – this enables the D/HH child access to their D/HH peers, the ability to gain adult D/HH role models and more.
- Parents are more involved in their D/HH child's life and school.
- Parents who had contact with either a Deaf mentor or other parents of D/HH children reported less stress in their lives.
- D/HH children who understand sign language, tend to understand more English.
- D/HH children who perform best academically, usually are the ones whose parents have effectively communicated with them from an early age.
- Studies with D/HH children show those with better developed communication skills, often have better skills in organizing behavior, maintaining attention, and inhibiting impulses.

Helpful Information:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED530818.pdf>

For references and resources, please go to this link:

<https://signonconnect.com/iep-ifsp/>



How to add SignOn to an IEP/IFSP:

There are multiple ways in which SignOn has been added to IEPs/IFSPs as a Related Service:

1. as Direct Service for the student

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(v) Consider whether the child requires assistive technology devices and services.

2. as Parent Counseling and Training

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) includes a Related Service:

Parent Counseling and Training:

1. Assisting parents in understanding the special needs of their child;
2. Providing parents with information about child development; and
3. Helping parents to acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP or IFSP.

3. -as Extracurricular Activities

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(ii) To be involved and progress in the general curriculum in accordance with 34 CFR §300.347(a)(1) and to **participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities**; and

(iii) To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the activities described in this section;

Cost of SignOn:

\$20 per SignOn session purchased for IEPs - Typically districts have been using 2-3 sessions per week.



Benefits of Using SignOn:

- Increased Signing Confidence.
- Personalized practice.
- One-on-One.
- Available on Desktop Computers, Tablets, Smartphones.
- Review your sessions anytime (your recordings only available on your dashboard).
- 35+ Ambassadors from across the country, rigorous training and background checks.
- ASLPI 3+ or higher.
- Private Platform.
- Personalized Feedback.
- Flexible Scheduling.
- During your session, a color coded timer is displayed in the top right corner. It automatically counts down the remaining time of your 30 minute session.

SignOn has a nationwide group of Deaf Adult Mentors (SignOn's Deaf ASL Ambassadors) that provide families and children who are deaf and/or hard of hearing the opportunity to interact with and learn from a Deaf Adult whose primary language is ASL.

SignOn's Deaf ASL Ambassadors are professionals and Deaf community members that are bilingual users of American Sign Language (ASL) and written English. Our Deaf ASL Ambassadors are specifically trained to work with families and children focusing on promoting positive interactions with the development of ASL using direct instruction to families and children, encouraging natural acquisition of ASL in a comfortable and familiar learning environment.

SignOn provides families with deaf/hard of hearing children an opportunity to work with trained Deaf adult mentors to begin acquiring American Sign Language and introducing the family to Deaf Culture. Our Deaf ASL Ambassadors strive to promote language acquisition and literacy, cultural awareness and understanding, and a feeling of belonging to a community that embraces each child's unique attributes.

SignOn's Deaf Ambassadors share valuable insight about their personal experiences growing up as a deaf person, as well as share their knowledge of Deaf culture, the Deaf Community and American Sign Language. Together, the Ambassadors, the child and their parents can build confidence and improve communication skills within their daily lives.

For more information about SignOn, contact Ashlee at: ashlee@signonconnect.com
Check out our website at: www.signonconnect.com