

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):

§ 300.346 Development, review, and revision of IEP

- 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-faqs-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-faqs-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-faqs-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.
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- 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

§ 300.346 Development, review, and revision of IEP.

(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.

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

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;



4. as Extended School Year

Sec. 300.106 Extended school year services

(a) General.

(1) Each public agency must ensure that extended school year services are available as necessary to provide FAPE, consistent with paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(2) Extended school year services must be provided only if a child's IEP Team determines, on an individual basis, in accordance with §§300.320 through 300.324, that the services are necessary for the provision of FAPE to the child.

(3) In implementing the requirements of this section, a public agency may not—

- (i) Limit extended school year services to particular categories of disability; or
- (ii) Unilaterally limit the type, amount, or duration of those services.

(b) Definition. As used in this section, the term extended school year services means special education and related services that—

(1) Are provided to a child with a disability—

- (i) Beyond the normal school year of the public agency;
- (ii) In accordance with the child's IEP; and
- (iii) At no cost to the parents of the child; and

(2) Meet the standards of the SEA.

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

New Information found:

1. What is meant by “supports for school personnel on behalf of the student?”

The IEP must describe the supports for school personnel that will be provided on behalf of the student in order for the student to advance toward attaining the annual goals, to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. Supports for school personnel are those that would help them to more effectively work with the student. These could include, for example, special training for a student's teacher to meet a unique and specific need of the student. These supports for school personnel are those that are needed to meet the unique and specific needs of the student. Examples of supports that may be provided for school personnel include:

- a. information on a specific disability and implications for instruction;
- b. training in use of specific positive behavioral interventions;
- c. training in the use of American Sign Language;
- d. assistance with curriculum modifications;
- e. behavioral consultation with school psychologist, social worker or other behavioral consultant; and/or
- f. transitional support services.

2. Why is it that “teacher of the visually impaired” and “teacher of the deaf” are not included in the drop-down option list of related services?

Teachers of the visually impaired and teachers of the deaf are individuals who provide specific services. There is no regulatory requirement that an IEP identify the qualifications of the individual providing services to a student.

3. What types of services are included in the definition of related services?

Related services means developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a student with a disability and includes speech-language pathology, audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, PT, OT, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling services, orientation and mobility services, evaluative and diagnostic medical services to determine if the student has a medically related disability, parent counseling and training, school health services, school nurse services, school social work, assistive technology services, appropriate access to recreation, including therapeutic recreation, other appropriate developmental or corrective support services, and other appropriate support services and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in students. This list is not exhaustive and may include other developmental, corrective or supportive services if they are required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education in order for the student to receive FAPE.

4. Regarding parent training and education – what is it and where does it go in the IEP? Can parent training and education be as simple as a list of resources? Is it a related service? How would frequency, duration and location be indicated for the services?

- Parent counseling and training is a related service and, if recommended for a student,



should be listed in the IEP under the IEP form section Related Services. Parent counseling and training means assisting parents in understanding the special needs of their child; providing parents with information about child development; and helping parents to acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- providing parents with information about cognitive and speech and language development;
- counseling the parents about how to respond at home to a student's behavior in a manner consistent with the in-school behavior management program;
- training parents to use the same mode of communication (e.g., sign language) the child would be using at school; and
- training on how to operate assistive technology devices at home.

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/formsnotices/IEP/training/answers-programs.htm>

This is IDEA's full requirement for specifying a child's related services in his or her IEP. This appears at §300.320(a)(4) and stipulates that each child's IEP must contain:

(4) A statement of the special education and **related services** and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, 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 to enable the child—

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

(ii) To be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) of this section, 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... [§300.320(a)(4)]

Parents - What are the rights and responsibilities of parents?

Parents of deaf or hard of hearing students also have rights under the IDEA. Parents are equal members of their child's IEP team, and their input and meaningful participation in the development of their child's IEP is an IDEA requirement. Also, parents can apply the remedies set forth in the IDEA's Procedural Safeguards if they disagree with the school over what their child needs, and/or how special education services are delivered to their child. For a more in-depth look at legal rights visit: [What does special education law say about educational interpreters?](#)

Parents also have responsibilities to assure that their child will benefit from his/her education. Toward the fulfillment of these responsibilities, parents can receive Parent Counseling and Training as a Related Service on their child's IEP, if it is determined to be a necessary at-home support for the child to benefit from his/her education. The purpose of Parent Counseling and Training is to help parents understand the special needs of their child, provide them with information about child development, and help parents acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP. This may involve helping the parent gain skills needed to support IEP goals at home (IDEA Sec. 300.34 (b) (8) (i,ii,iii). Typically, these services are sought from qualified teachers, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, parent groups, disability organizations and/or professionals or representatives of community organizations.

Parent Counseling & Training

A common example often used to exemplify the purpose of IDEA's Parent Counseling and Training is sign language instruction for hearing families of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. If the student is learning sign language and using an educational interpreter at school, but the family uses spoken English at home, there can be a



huge communication breakdown between the child and his/her parents. That communication breakdown could inhibit a student's ability to complete homework, practice new vocabulary, discuss what he/she is learning, and process new information. Ultimately, it could even prevent the student from making educational progress. Given the research that supports the importance of parental involvement in their children's education, the spirit of the IDEA upholds this value through the provision of Parent Counseling and Training as a Related Service. The bottom line is that you can request sign language support for your family.

<https://www.classroominterpreting.org/Parents/ParentRights.asp>

Special Considerations for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Students

The IDEA states that in the development, review and revision of an IEP, the team **must** consider special factors as follows:

(iv) Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of the child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communication with peers and professionals 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 communication devices and services." IDEA Sec. 1414 (d) (3) (B)

This language underscores the significance of communication in school, and the unique, individual needs specific to each deaf or hard of hearing student. It's important to note that the federal statute does not proscribe the language or mode of communication of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, but acknowledges the need to consider his/her individual communication needs, particularly as they relate to opportunities for direct communication with peers and direct instruction from professionals in whatever mode the child uses to communicate. This is extremely important as parents and IEP teams assign or hire educational interpreter, based on the child's mode of communication. Specifically:

"Interpreting services, as used with respect to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, includes oral transliteration services, cued language transliteration services, and sign language interpreting services." IDEA Sec. 300.34 (b) (4)

If the student is an ASL communicator, then the educational interpreter will need to be proficient in American Sign Language. If the student uses Signed Exact English (SEE), then the interpreter must be qualified in SEE. If the child is not a signer but relies on oral communication, it is appropriate to request an oral interpreter. Cued Speech transliterators are appropriate for students using Cued Speech, and so on.

<https://www.classroominterpreting.org/Parents/Law.asp>

Parents - Case Studies: Exploring Different Perspectives on Educational Interpreting

A "Why Me?" The Story of an Oral, Hard of Hearing Atypical Educational Interpreter User

By Janet and Sara DesGeorges

Janet, a Parent:

When my daughter Sara was seven years old, we began to question her communication access in the classroom where she attended her neighborhood (mainstreamed) school.

Sara was born with a moderate hearing loss and had developed good oral communication skills (with a little sprinkling of sign language thrown in throughout her early years). By the time she started school, her 'native' language was obviously spoken English, and people would make comments such as "we would never even guess she has a hearing loss."

I however, began to hear and think about the issues related to the typical hard of hearing child. I had read a book about kids (*Our Forgotten Children: Hard of Hearing Pupils in the Schools*, editor: Julie Davis, SHHH publications, 2001) that focused on education for kids who are hard of hearing--who were not deaf, but not hearing--and the potential



of 'falling through the cracks' in education, not to mention the social implications of navigating the world with a hearing loss.

A turning point in our understanding of how Sara understood spoken language was through an evaluation tool that had been performed in her classroom, called the 'Functional Listening Evaluation' (available online at www.handsandvoices.org). It showed that when Sara was evaluated in a quiet, close up to the speaker environment, she could access 96% of spoken language! But by placing her back eight feet, in minimum background noise, without access to the speaker's lips, her speech reception dropped to 28%. This was the hard data that was used to convince the IEP team that Sara needed more than just her auditory listening to receive an appropriate education. It was also through my connections with other parents who had hard of hearing children that helped me begin to look beyond Sara's 'label' and begin to really seek a fuller communication accessible environment for her.

As an IEP team, we then decided to pilot the use of educational interpreting services. I will always remember the day when she skipped through the door from school and said, "today, the teacher said 'mumble, mumble, mumble.' I looked over at the interpreter and understood to put my book in my desk." I knew then that Sara could benefit from interpreting services.

Fast forward six years later, and it is still true. She recently started school as a high school freshman, and when she walked through the door to her geography class, the teacher had a full beard, and a style of speaking in which she understood zero percent of what was said. Luckily, the interpreter was there for full communication access.

Over the years, we have been faced with a lot of issues that have resulted from Sara being an atypical interpreter user. She has good speech, so people think that because she can 'say it,' she must automatically be 'hearing it all'. We have had to negotiate with the interpreters themselves to create a new level of awareness and understanding that the interpreting services would be her back up--not her primary mode of communication. We have also had to deal with this issues which arise from the personal relationship issues and boundaries of this unique relationship between an interpreter and a student.

Some of the benefits of utilizing interpreting services have been an increased competency in sign language skills, enhancement of her social life through access to other deaf kids and adults, and a tool which will be at her disposal for her college education, where large classes are predominantly a factor. I think that there are always pros and cons of any situation, but I think that neither Sara nor I, as her parent, have regretted the decision to utilize educational interpreting services.

Sara's Turn:

I have ultimately felt like I have benefited from my interpreter, whom I really appreciate. It is true that my Geography teacher is hard to understand. I appreciate just having the chance to look at my interpreter and catch the most important things the teacher is saying. It's also nice that I can understand what is going on in my classes. I feel that if I didn't have an interpreter I would be getting lower grades and I would feel lost. If I didn't get the information I need, I know my self confidence would be low because I wouldn't know what people are talking about. I feel happy and grateful that I have an educational interpreter.

<https://www.classroominterpreting.org/Parents/CaseStudies/DesGeorges.asp>

Deaf Students Education Services

Agency: Department of Education.

Action: Notice of Policy Guidance.

Summary: The Department provides additional guidance about part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 504) as they relate to the provision of appropriate education service to students who are deaf. This guidance is issued in response to concerns regarding Departmental policy on the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students who are deaf.

Many of these concerns were expressed in the report of the Commission on Education of the Deaf. This

guidance is intended to furnish State and local education agency personnel with background information and specific steps that will help to ensure

that children and youth who are deaf are provided with a free appropriate public education. It also describes procedural safeguards that ensure parents are knowledgeable about their rights and about placement decisions made by public agencies.

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq9806.html>

