

ENROLMENT

Assessing the need for an Interpreter

Effective communication between the child care professional and families/carers is essential to delivering high quality programs that meet the needs of Australia's diverse population. Interpreting and translating assistance can make the early care and education setting more accessible to families who may have limited competency in the English language. This assistance is an important way to improve interaction and engagement with all families accessing child care services.

This information sheet provides you with a framework for assessing if translated materials or interpreting services are required to facilitate the enrolment process.

What is the role of an interpreter?

An interpreter's role is to convey an oral or signed message or statement from one language into another with accuracy and objectivity to enable communication between two parties who use different languages. (The Western Australian Languages Services Policy 2008).

When can an interpreter help with enrolment and communication?

- When families/carers wanting to access your child care service are unable to communicate effectively in English.
- When no other person acceptable to both parties, who is able to facilitate communication between the family/carer and your service, is available.
- When no translated materials facilitating the enrolment of a child into your service is available in a language that the family/carer is literate in.
- When you have concerns that information required for safe and appropriate care and education has not been communicated or communicated to the level required.

How do I know if an interpreter is required?

It is not always easy to determine how much someone can understand – this applies to the family/carer and potentially to the person they have brought along to help them communicate.

Some tips to support your initial communication with persons whose first language is not English:

- Speak clearly and in plain English.
- Give time for responses (30 seconds is not unusual)
- If you do not receive a response this may indicate that the question has not been understood and you may:
 - repeat the question.
 - ask the person to repeat the question back to you.
- If the person cannot respond to or repeat the question an interpreter's assistance may be required.

The following questions support you in determining the language competency of persons who speak English as their second language:

- Do you want or need an interpreter?

Even if the answer is no, continue to assess the need for an interpreter by asking questions such as:

- Can you tell me where you were born?
- Have you ever accessed child care services for your child/ren?
- How long ago did you move to Australia/the city?
- Are you satisfied that we can go ahead in English or do you think we need an interpreter?

Even if the carer/family answer all the questions there is no guarantee that their level of English is sufficient to facilitate the appropriate enrolment of the child/ren.

What to do if additional support is required to facilitate the enrolment process?

- Check if translated materials are available in the preferred language.
- Call your Inclusion Support Facilitator to start the development of a Service Support Plan (SSP).
- Contact BISS to ask if additional translated materials are available and/or arrange an interpreter for the date of enrolment.

REFERENCE

1. http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/Languages/language_services_2008.pdf
2. http://ceh.org.au/downloads/ass_need_interpreter.pdf