**Top 10 Tips for Working with an Interpreter**

When someone is translating for you, these are some things you can do to make it go more smoothly:

1. **Provide background information** (anything you know about the topic, people, situation or text that will be translated, to orient the translator). It will help the translator to identify potential areas of conflict as well as give them time to look any specific vocabulary they might be unsure of.
2. **Speak in short phrases**. The translator has to remember what you said and repeat it to the parents. If you talk for too long before allowing them to translate, they may not remember everything. The interpreter doesn’t want to interrupt you and will usually wait for you to pause. Two or three sentences is usually the maximum a non professional can handle accurately.
3. **Avoid long, complex sentences, and do not use slang, jargon, or colloquial expressions.** The parents will not understand and the interpreter will have to explain to them. Remember, the translator may not be an expert in education. If he/she has to explain something to the parents, it needs to be clearly and concisely explained to him/her first. You may need to ask the translator if he/she understands; if not, give more explanations.
4. **Realize that your body language and tone of voice will be read by others and will influence how your message will be understood.** Also remember that there is a delay. So, if you wanted to smile when you were speaking, remember to smile while the interpreter is speaking as well. Be aware of body language and gestures. You can communicate a lot of information to the parents using physical cues.
5. **Introduce yourselves.** But don't jump into the business at hand. Many cultures find it offensive to get right down to business and a certain amount of “small talk” is expected. Ask them about their plans for the weekend, etc. before starting. The minute or two you take to set the stage at the beginning is the key to easy communication across the language barrier.
6. **Physically position yourselves so that you are facing the parent,** Place the interpreter physically close to both of you, but not in a position that breaks the line of sight. (Similarly, if you are using a telephone interpreter, you and the parent should sit facing each other.)
7. **Begin with a minute or two of light conversation to establish a reliable, steady rhythm before getting into the business at hand.** In consecutive interpreting, it's also crucial to establish the quantity of speech in each segment before pausing for the interpreter to begin. (Two or three sentences is usually the maximum a non professional can handle accurately.) Have the interpreter instruct your client to stick as closely as possible to that same speech segment size in each round of conversation.
8. **Avoid jokes and humorous stories**. Humor does not travel well. Also avoid idioms and “sayings”. These tend to get lost in translation.
9. **Advise your group that only one person should speak at a time.** The interpreter can’t listen to and relay multiple conversations accurately.
10. **Give the translator time**; translators sometimes need to think about how to express a concept in the foreign language. Remember that a translated conference may take up to twice as long - schedule accordingly.