



## Consideration Guide for an Educational Interpreter



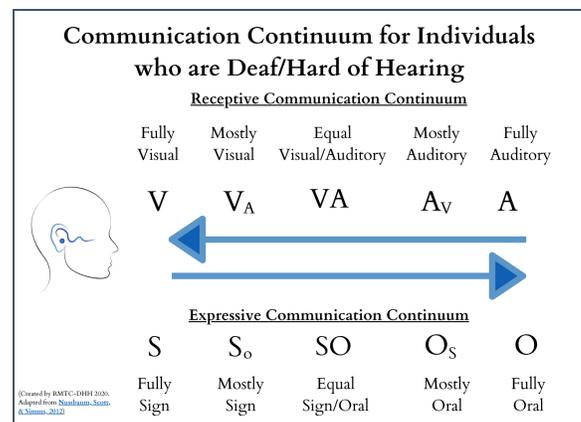
The need for a related service such as an educational interpreter must be reviewed at least annually at the individual educational plan (IEP) meeting (Rule [6A-6.03028\(3\)\(f\) and \(g\)](#), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)).

Determination of need requires a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) problem-solving format that addresses the whole child. It may also include response to intervention (RtI), where the student is provided [specially designed instruction](#) (Rule [6A-6.03411\(1\)\(jj\)](#), F.A.C.) to learn how to use, advocate, and problem solve the use of an educational interpreter. In addition, the school team may require professional development for staff members to ensure they utilize the educational interpreter services appropriately and support the student’s use of the service.

“The U.S. Department of Education’s document on [Policy Guidance](#) directs the educational team to consider social, emotional, and cultural needs, as well as linguistic and academic needs when considering whether a student needs an educational interpreter. The deaf or hard of hearing student must be able to access all aspects of the classroom curriculum, not just the teacher’s lecture. This includes peer interaction which is important for social development.” (Schick, n.d.a).

Teams should use **multiple** assessment tools (Rule [6A-6.0331\(5\)\(a\)](#), F.A.C.) and strategies over time to gather various data points. Analysis of collected data to make adjustments ensures that the student is receiving complete access to communication in all school settings at the same time as their peers.

The final decision regarding the provision of an educational interpreter is made at an IEP meeting with the entire team present after reviewing the data.





## MTSS for Educational Interpreter Need

**American Sign Language (ASL) assessments** - ASL assessments determine the student's level of receptive and expressive sign language. RMTC-DHH has curated a list of [ASL Assessments](#).

**Functional listening assessment (FLA)** - It is stated in Rule 6A-6.03013, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), "A functional listening assessment is an assessment of the student's educational environment to determine how noise, distance, and visual input affect a student's listening abilities." A functional listening assessment is a diagnostic tool used to help teams make data-driven educational decisions about instruction, accommodations, assistive technology, accessible instructional materials, related services, supplementary aids, and student interaction with the learning environment. Functional listening assessments can be conducted through the eyes via sign language, or through the ears via listening and spoken language. The district may utilize modified versions of informal functional listening assessments or select a tool that relies on observed conditions for determining access to instruction. For more information on functional listening assessments and to find available FLAs, please see [RMTC-DHH's Assessment Tools page](#).

**Classroom observations** - Observe the student with an interpreter using the Placement and Readiness Checklists ([PARC](#)). The "PARC: Interpreted/Transliterated Education Readiness Checklist" and the "PARC: Instructional Communication Access Checklist" are both recommended. A best practice is to observe the student utilizing an interpreter several times throughout the year in different settings, both academic and non-academic or extracurricular, if applicable. This gives the team feedback on adjusting the service and providing explicit instruction on how to use the service properly. If the student is not utilizing the service properly, the team may need to make adjustments. Here are a few examples of considerations:

- Age-related differences in using interpreters ([Schick, 2014](#))
- Strategic or flexible seating for the student and interpreter
- Change in style of signing (e.g., more ASL, fingerspelling, or expansion)
- Interpreter qualifications ([Kurz, 2014](#))
- Joint and split attention between the speaker and interpreter



- Teacher training on presentation speed or style ([DeafTEC, n.d.](#))
- Student language and vocabulary skills
- Interpreter support of language and learning goals, such as interpreting in a manner that may facilitate vocabulary learning ([Schick, 2024](#))
- Sign language vocabulary ([FDOE, 2017](#))
- Instruction in ASL Content Standards Kindergarten-Grade 12 ([FDOE, 2017](#)), ([Gallaudet et al., 2018](#))

**Student interview** - Including students' feedback is crucial in all age groups. Their opinions not only matter but can determine the fidelity with which the interpreter is utilized.

[Student ASL Access Satisfaction Survey](#)

[Student Oral Transliteration Satisfaction Survey](#)

Additional questions to consider:

- Do you want an interpreter? When? Why?
- What type of signing style do you prefer?

## Communication Plan and the IEP Meeting

The IEP team uses assessment, checklist, and observational data, as well as other information, to complete the [Communication Plan](#) (Rule [6A-6.03028\(3\)\(g\)](#), F.A.C.) before the development of the IEP.

The IEP team should consider the data gathered from all sources. Determining the need for an educational interpreter is an IEP team decision and should not be unilaterally decided by one party or be decided before the meeting (i.e., predetermination). The team should come to a consensus as to whether the utilization of an educational interpreter is an appropriate service for providing access to the educational environment, including extracurricular school-sponsored events. It may be a good idea to include the student in the IEP meeting if the topic of ASL or the use of a sign language interpreter is the main topic/issue, or if a change to service provision is being considered. The student's thoughts should be the first perspective considered to



encourage self-determination. The interpreter should be invited to the meeting and be able to share input and observations. It is important to note that the interpreter is not there to interpret at this time but rather to serve as a member of the IEP team by providing insight on the communication needs of the student.

The provision or denial of an educational interpreter should be described in the present level of performance and may be justified in the effects of disability in the IEP. If interpreting services are included in the IEP, the team may also need to write IEP goals and provide [specially designed instruction](#) via the [Expanded Skills Standards \(Rule 6A-1.09401\(1\)\(k\), F.A.C.\)](#) for how to use an interpreter, how to identify communication breakdowns, and self-advocacy and self-determination skill development. On the services page, the related service of the educational interpreter and the support to staff required (e.g., training on how to use an interpreter in the classroom) should be included.

An interpreter alone does not always guarantee complete and comprehensive access to instruction. It may be necessary for interpreting to be supplemented with additional accommodations and supports for full access. Assistive technologies, such as captioned media or the use of Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services, as well as other supports, such as copies of notes and the use of ASL dictionaries, may be necessary for the student to have access equitable to their hearing peers.

Additional resources may be found on the RMTC-DHH [Interpreting](#) web page.



## References

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### Suggested Citation:

Resource Materials and Technology Center [RMTC-DHH]. (2025, November 4). Consideration guide for an educational interpreter. [Handout]. <https://www.rmtcdhh.org/resources/interpreting>

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This resource was developed by the Resource Materials and Technology Center for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, an Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)-Funded State Project the Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools and Community Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services with IDEA Part B and IDEA Part B Trust funds and through an agreement with the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. The information and resources are provided as a free awareness service to the educational community and do not reflect any specific endorsement by any parties involved.