**BEST PRACTICES: WORKING WITH AN INTERPRETER**

Introduce yourself to the interpreter. Determine the interpreter’s level of English proficiency and professional training and request that the interpreter interpret everything into the first person (to avoid “he said, she said”).

**SHARE BEFORE THE CONFERENCE**

Give the interpreter an overview of the information that will be shared and the agenda for the meeting. This is also a time to share any technical terms that may be used, if the information may be highly sensitive, or if the meeting may be intense or raise emotions.

**ACKNOWLEDGE THE INTERPRETER AS A PROFESSIONAL IN COMMUNICATION.**

Respect his or her role.

**SPEAK AT AN EVEN PACE IN RELATIVELY SHORT SEGMENTS.**

Pause so the interpreter can interpret.

**DO NOT HOLD THE INTERPRETER RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT THE PARENT SAYS OR DOESN’T SAY.**

The interpreter is the medium, not the source, of the message. If you feel that you are not getting the type of response you were expecting, restate the question or consult with the interpreter to better understand if there is a cultural barrier that is interfering with communication.

If you need to ask questions that may be extremely personal or sensitive, explain to the parent the purpose of the information and reiterate that the information will remain confidential.

**SHARE AN OVERVIEW OF THE INFORMATION**

Give the interpreter an overview of the information that will be shared and the agenda for the meeting. This is also a time to share any technical terms that may be used, if the information may be highly sensitive, or if the meeting may be intense or raise emotions.

**BE PATIENT.**

Sharing information and providing support across a language barrier takes time. However, the time spent up front will be paid back by good rapport and clear communication that will avoid wasted time and misunderstandings.

**HIGHLY IDIOMATIC SPEECH**

Complicated sentence structure, sentence fragments, changing your idea in the middle of a sentence, and asking multiple questions at once.

**MAKING ASSUMPTIONS OR GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT YOUR PARENT OR THEIR EXPERIENCES.**

Common practices or beliefs in a community may not apply to everyone in that community.

**PATRONIZING THE PARENT.**

A lack of English language skills is not a reflection of low cognitive function or a lack of education. Your parent may be a teacher or a medical doctor in her own country just as easily as she may be a farm worker.

**AVOID**

Highly idiomatic speech, complicated sentence structure, sentence fragments, changing your idea in the middle of a sentence, and asking multiple questions at one time.

Adapted from Refugee Health Technical Assistance
https://refugeehalthta.org/access-to-care/language-access/best-practices-communicating-through-an-interpreter/