



Registration open for the Family Camp! Go to our website and click on "events" to find more details, registration form, etc. Early bird registration (before May 15) will save you money!

We continue a series of articles we started in the January issue about advocating for educational services, based on input from various parents and professionals who've learned things through experience they'd like to pass on to younger parents. This time around we focus on interpreting services--we plan further articles on FM and sound field amplification, text services, and other means of improving access for students. The series is still in development, so feel free to send in your comments, suggestions, questions and stories!

The Fourth R: 'Riting the IEP

Part 2: Interpreter services

Lorna Irwin (with lots of help)

Interpreting services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing vary tremendously. Not only do they include interpretation or transliteration in several different modes (American Sign Language, English-based sign systems, Cued Speech and oral transliteration), but different students will use the support provided by an interpreter in different ways. As for other communication decisions, parents, students, teachers and interpreters must work together to figure out what works for that individual student. Neither the child's audiogram nor his oral skills are an adequate guide to whether or not he needs an interpreter; the issue is how fully he is able to access the communication that is happening around him. School environments present special challenges to even the most "oral" of children--new concepts and vocabulary, group discussions, background noise and distance.

As a parent, the more you know about interpreting, the better you will be able to advocate for your child and make sure he has the interpreting services he needs. It is also important that you be knowledgeable about the Idaho Educational Interpreter Act, which mandates that interpreters working in schools be either certified through a national organization or demonstrate a basic level of competency through the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA). There is more information about this at www.iesdb.org, under "Educational Interpreters," including a link to the entire statute.

Passage of this law has made it easier for parents to ask about interpreter qualifications and receive meaningful answers. There are a couple of additional considerations. An interpreter taking the EIPA can choose to take it at wither the Elementary or Secondary level, and has a choice of languages--American Sign Language, Manually Coded English, or Pidgin Signed English. Because qualified interpreters are hard to find, there is a provision for an interpreter to apply for emergency authorization (there is a pre-hire screening test which can provide some information as to the applicant's skill level, offered through Boys Town national Research Hospital, the same entity that coordinates the EIPA full diagnostic assessment.) If you have concerns about whether your school is following the regulations, Joelyne Ball (joelyne.ball@iesdb.org) is the Interpreter Education Coordinator for Idaho, and part of her job is supporting Local Education Agencies as they strive to provide access and follow the requirements of the Idaho Educational Interpreter Act.

Learn more about educational

interpreting: There is a wealth of information at the EIPA website, www.classroominterpreting.org, for students, interpreters, parents, teachers and administrators. Don't restrict yourself to reading the section aimed at parents; you will learn something by looking at interpreting from each different perspective. This is also a good resource to share with your child's teacher and the school administration.

Here are some hypothetical (and not-so-hypothetical) questions about advocating for interpreter services:

My daughter uses a cochlear implant, is very oral, but also uses an interpreter. The teacher and principal have noticed that she doesn't look at the interpreter all the time, and can't believe she's really getting enough benefit from

interpreting services to justify providing them. How do I convince them that she's really not hearing as well as they assume she is? Students who have good access to sound, and good auditory skills, often use an interpreter as "back up" rather than as their primary means of accessing communication. Under some circumstances (group discussions, school assemblies) they may make more use of an interpreter than they do during a teacher's lecture. An educational audiologist or Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) may be able to provide information to school staff and administration about the limitations of the student's listening equipment, be it cochlear implants or hearing aids. One overlooked strategy, especially for older children, is to ask the student, who may be able to give a very clear explanation of what he needs the interpreter for, and under which conditions.

My son had a wonderful interpreter this year, and I want her to continue as his interpreter forever! Can I request this interpreter on his IEP? No, you can't request a specific individual service provider on an IEP. However, you can, with help from your son and his current interpreter, figure out what made this interpreter such a "good fit." Perhaps it is her overall skill level, or skills with ASL or English or the ability to rapidly switch between the two. To some extent, you can request specific skills in the IEP, but there are some drawbacks to doing so. If you are too specific about the interpreter characteristics desired, it may be impossible to find the right person. Staying with the same interpreter year after year, no matter how "perfect," can be detrimental to the student in the long run, limiting his exposure to other individuals' styles and fostering dependence. If there is more than one interpreter available within the district, some parents request that they be rotated around so that their children get experience with different interpreters.

We've found out that my daughter's hearing loss is progressive. She knows only a little bit of sign language now, and does not use an interpreter, but is starting to miss things in class. How can we ask the school to hire an interpreter so she can start learning to use one? Be specific about your goals in providing interpreter services. Simply watching an interpreter is not an optimal way to learn sign language. You can ask for additional support for your daughter's sign language learning. Perhaps there is an ASL class she can take through the school or community, or it may be possible to arrange for tutoring with a ToD or sign language instructor. Learn sign language and use it at home; find opportunities for her to socialize with other sign language users, including adults who are Deaf or hard of hearing. (For any child who is using sign language, these are ways parents can enhance language development, with some important social benefits, especially if the child has limited contact with other signers in school.)

I have some concerns about how well my son is using interpreter services, and I'd like to have his interpreter at the next IEP meeting. How I can arrange this? Not only do you have the right to bring anyone you want into the meeting, as a "related service provider" under the IDEA, your child's interpreter should be present. (If your child is present at the IEP meeting, a second interpreter should provide the interpreting services for the meeting.) In many cases, the interpreter will have the best idea of what is working or not working for the child's communication access in the classroom, and be able to provide valuable information to the rest of the team. There may also be a need for your son to learn about the role of the interpreter, and how to use one. Often we neglect to specifically teach interpreter use to children, assuming they already know or will learn it "on the job." Bringing in a third party such as an interpreter coordinator or another interpreter is a good idea.

I visited school the other day, and the teacher had my child and the interpreter working on a lesson together in a corner of the room while she worked with the rest of the class. I thought interpreters weren't supposed to be tutoring? Ideally, the interpreter should be interpreting; most do not have the credentials to be teaching. In practice, there are situations in which the student needs more support, or in which direct instruction works better. How much tutoring the interpreter will do should be spelled out in the IEP, and the interpreter should receive training in tutoring and supervision from the teacher. Other tutoring services, including visits from a ToD, are alternatives. One gray area is sign language vocabulary development. An interpreter and student may need time set aside for previewing upcoming new vocabulary and agreeing on the signs to be used, or even inventing signs for specialized vocabulary.

My son has ADHD in addition to his hearing loss, and can be a handful. The teacher wants the interpreter to monitor and control his behavior in addition to interpreting. Is this appropriate? The role of the interpreter is to interpret, and if he is also the disciplinarian, this can lead to confusion and resentment on the part of the student. After all, no other student in the room has an adult watching him full time and jumping on every little misbehavior. Ideally, all discipline should be handled by the teacher, with the interpreter there to make sure the child understands the rules and consequences.

My gorgeous deaf daughter was just elected homecoming queen. The school didn't budget for the extra interpreter hours. A football game at night is going to be a communication nightmare for her. What can we do? If your daughter has an interpreter for the classroom, she is entitled to an interpreter for all school-sponsored activities, including field trips, sports, after-school clubs, etc. They're going to have to find a way, and be better prepared. Her next move may be joining the track team, or getting elected to Student Council!

)))))))))))))))

Hearing Aid Legislation Progress Report

by Andrea Amestoy

Thank you to all of you who submitted wonderful personal testimonies on the financial hardships of paying for hearing aids out of pocket. I've been forwarding your emails to my representative as well as other material in support of hearing aid coverage by private insurance companies. Quite a number of states already mandate insurance companies to cover hearing aids and I'm hoping Idaho eventually can join that rank! To get a bill introduced and hopefully passed takes a lot of hard, diligent work. If it doesn't go through this year, don't despair! A lot of ears have heard our cries and know this is a pressing issue for Idahoans. We may have an opportunity to meet and share our stories so PLEASE be willing to come down and support this cause. This is the only way that the need will demonstrated to those who pass these bills. The following is from my representative:

Andrea,

Let me see if I can get a bill together this session. **When I have a bill, then it would be great if you and your friends would tell your stories to the members of the H&W committee.** Then they will have heard about the subject and will know of some real people who have real problems with hearing. Especially the value of hearing to children since that is what our bill will include. I'm sorry that this seems to have taken a lot of time, but as I have said this is a big year for insurance folks with the exchange and other big things on the agenda--people are really busy. But we have to do our homework before we bring a bill--talking to stakeholders like the insurance companies, children's advocates, our H&W agencies. It takes time to get a bill ready to be presented. So just wait a little while longer and let's see what I can get done.

(contact Andrea at andrea_corn@yahoo.com or 208-866-5180.)

)))))))))))))))

Some Bits & Pieces:

The Moog Center for Deaf Education in St. Louis, Missouri, has received a one-year pilot grant to develop a protocol for evaluating the effectiveness of tele-intervention for children with hearing loss under the age of three. They are looking for families who've chosen spoken language as their mode of communication to participate in a study comparing face-to-face coaching of parents with on-line coaching, with the eventual goal of developing a distance program. There is no cost to participants, but a time commitment for a trip to St. Louis, regular on-line sessions, filling out surveys and questionnaires, and progress evaluations. For more information, visit their website at www.moogcenter.org, or contact Betsy Moog Brooks at bbrooks@moogcenter.org or (314) 692-7172.

Tara Adams has been offering private ASL classes and tutoring in the Boise area for several years. She now has her own classroom facility and website, www.aslexpressions.com. She even does tutoring via Skype, Facetime or videophone.

The Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is in the process of ordering new books and videos for their resource library. If you have any recommendations for materials that you feel other parents would enjoy reading and/or watching, send them to Steven Snow at steven.snow@vr.idaho.gov.

)))))))))))))))

We welcome submissions from our readers! Send in articles, stories, ideas for stories, book and product reviews, anything you have to share to niwri2@msn.com, or call (208)324-7544. "Wavelengths" is published every two months, give or take a bit.

Upcoming Events

(Be sure to check our webpage or "like" our Facebook page to receive up-to-date information. If you'd like to have an interpreter present for an Idaho Hands & Voices activity, please let us know by email as far in advance as possible.)

Family ASL Workshop series with Mikkel Nelson (IESDB Deaf Mentor Program) Fridays from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the River Valley d/hh preschool classroom, 2900 E River Valley St, Meridian. This is an opportunity to meet other families and share experiences learning ASL. Fun activities will be provided to practice signing together and get to know other families. Refreshments will be provided. All families are welcome! March 15 "Meet & Greet;" April 19 "Musical Night;" May 17 "Comedy Night."

Idaho Parents UnLimited mini-conference in Coeur d'Alene, March 19-20: www.ipulidaho.org

Ice Skating with Treasure Valley Hands & Voices: Sunday, March 17: at Ice World, 7072 S. Eisenman Road in Boise. IDHV member cost is \$3 per person, which includes admission fee and skate rental. (Helmets are available for an additional \$3 each.) Join us from 12:00-2:00 p.m. No RSVP necessary.

Easter Fun is "springing" up in multiple locations:

Saturday, March 16: Signing Easter Bunny at Barnes & Noble, 1239 Poleline Rd, Twin Falls, 2:00 pm (plan to arrive early.) Sponsored by Magic Valley ESCAPADE; contact Janice Finch at janice.finch.iesdb.org.

Saturday, March 23: Easter potluck meal and activities, including a signing Easter Bunny in Dalton Gardens at the Dalton Gardens Church of Christ, 6439 N 4th St (in the outbuilding at the back of the parking lot.) Sponsored by N Idaho Deaf Club, IESDB and Idaho Hands & Voices. Contact Alyssa Frahm at 208-665-5851 or 6idahoins@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 31: Deaf Center of Idaho EGGstravaganza, 9:30-11:00 am, Storey Park, 215 E Franklin Rd, Meridian. The egg hunt starts at 10:00!

Idaho Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf is celebrating their 40th anniversary with a conference and related events at College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls April 5-6. The focus is on ASL use in storytelling, and all are welcome to come for any part of or the entire weekend. Find more information and register at www.idahorid.org.

Magic Valley Hands & Voices is planning a "Garden Party" for Saturday, April 13, at the Jerome Public Library, 100 1st Avenue E. Come play with pots, soil, and seeds, and enjoy some treats. More information coming, or contact Lorna at 324-7544. (We've just learned that IESDB and IPUL will probably co-sponsor a parent workshop on writing IEP goals at CSI from 9:00 am to noon the same day--we were trying for earlier in the month, and they were trying for later, but that's the way it worked out.... If you are from out of town, this might not be so bad! You've just time to feed the kids and do a couple of errands before heading to Jerome.)

ASL film "Slot" (with English subtitles) April 20 in Coeur d'Alene, 2:00 pm at the Coeur d'Alene Shrine Building 1250 West Lancaster Rd. Hayden, Idaho 83835; \$11 for the movie, \$15 for the movie plus dinner. Seating is limited, and you can pre-order tickets from Jerry Sparling, Jerrysparling@gmail.com. Proceeds benefit the North Idaho Deaf Club.

The Signing Shakespeare schedule is here! This summer's interpreted Idaho Shakespeare Festival dates are:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Blithe Spirit | June 26 |
| Much Ado About Nothing | July 17 |
| Sweeney Todd | July 31 |
| King Richard III | August 20 |
| The Foreigner | September 11 |

There is more information at www.idahoshakespeare.org; signed synopses of the plays will soon be available at this location. Major ticket discounts can be requested by deaf people/family members/ASL students for these performances.