

# Cultural Brokers

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*Roles and Guidelines*

# Interpreters, Translators, Cultural Brokers: Roles

- Provide linguistic and cultural information during ethnographic study
- Assist with evaluation and assessment
- Translate documents for parents
- Interpret for parent meetings
- Provide L1 instructional support

# Collaborating With Cultural Brokers

- Use ASHA guidelines for preparing to work with interpreters before meeting with family or student
- Brokers are expert in their language and culture, yet may not be familiar with team process- take time for general orientation, explanations, and purpose of meeting

# Guidelines For Working With Interpreters

- Recruit a consistent pool of bilingual staff
- Establish professional relationships
- Understand mutual communication styles
- Plan for debriefing and sharing
- Direct eye contact to parent, not to interpreter
- Avoid sidebars with English speaking colleagues
- Use short concise sentences
  - Watch figurative language, humor ●
  - Avoid gestures, monitor proxemics ●
  - Pause frequently ●
  - Allow for more than yes/no responses ●
  - Check for understanding ●
  - Provide follow-up opportunities for questions ●

# Cultural Collaboration

- Enjoy the professional growth opportunity to learn about another culture
- Learn how to greet family, pronounce names, show respect
- Demonstrate eagerness to understand family perspective
- Build on training in area of pragmatics to assist teams in meeting dynamics

# Possible Sources For Cultural Brokers

- Public or private agencies that serve specific ethnic communities (e.g., *Asia inc.*)
- Ethnic churches or temples
- Translation or language bank centers (e.g., International services center, Cleveland)
- Private individuals who may be listed in local directories
- Universities, colleges, and technical career training centers (faculty or students)
- Staff from community-based adult ESOL programs
- Staff within your school district  
(E.G., World languages teachers, or any other staff who may be bilingual)
- *Use adult family members with caution and only if no other available options*
- *Avoid using the student as translator*

# A Final Thought

***The physical, emotional, and social cost of over-identifying language disorders in children through the use of inappropriate measures certainly justifies a more time-consuming, but also more thorough and accurate assessment approach***

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