Best Practices for Working with an Interpreter

Clear communication is essential in any professional setting, and interpreters play a vital role in bridging language gaps to ensure mutual understanding.
This guide outlines key practices for working respectfully and efficiently with interpreters, helping to foster clear communication and a productive exchange of information.

- ✓ **Allow the interpreter to introduce themselves and share the pre-session information.** This helps set expectations and ensures a smooth interpretation process.

- ✓ **Speak directly to the parent.** The interpreter will speak in the first person to emphasize his/her role as a neutral and impartial party.

- ✓ **Physically place yourself so that you are facing the parent, and the parent is facing you and/or the team**. Place the interpreter physically close to both of you, but not in a position that breaks the line of sight between you and parent.

- ✓ **Maintain eye contact with the parents**. The interpreter is simply conveying the message.

- ✓ **Use clear and concise language, avoid jargon or abbreviations** is possible. While the interpreter does have knowledge applicable to the educational setting, it is important for you to clarify any terms that you feel may not be understood by the public.

- ✓ **Ensure comprehension** by asking if the parent understands what you are saying. Do not depend upon the interpreter to ensure understanding. The interpreter is simply delivering your message in the target language. It is still your responsibility to ensure that the message and concepts are understood.

- ✓ **Pause if the interpreter gives you a signal.** The interpreter may hold up a hand to request that the speakers pause if the speech is occurring too quickly or if a term is unknown. The interpreter will clarify.

- ✓ **Speak naturally** with a normal voice tone and volume in short and complete sentences.

- ✓ **Everything said will be interpreted**. Side conversations and comments from either party will be interpreted as if everyone was speaking the same language.