



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	II	Intake, Investigation & Response	
Chapter:	C	Initial Response	9-8-2008
Subchapter:	3	Unique Client Circumstances	
Issuance:	100	Intervening with Clients who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	

Purpose:

This issuance establishes the policy and procedures on staff intervention in reports and referrals involving children or adults who are Deaf or hard of hearing when the services of a certified interpreter are needed.

Authority:

- N.J.S.A. 34:1-69.7

Policy:

A) Overview

It is the policy and practice of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) to ensure that communication with any Deaf or hearing impaired person who is referred to CP&P, or is part of a family that has been referred to CP&P for services, is conducted in a manner that is clear and understandable to both parties.

B) Certified Interpreter Required

When one or more of the principal parties involved in an investigation or request for services (child, parent, parent's partner, guardian, family member, neighbor, witness, etc.) is Deaf or hard of hearing, the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing must be contacted to secure a sign language interpreter who has been certified by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Family members, friends, neighbors, teachers or other individuals who make claims of sign language proficiency should not be used by CP&P to facilitate communication between CP&P staff and any person who is Deaf or hard of hearing who utilizes sign language as his primary means of communication. Further, speech reading (lip reading) or writing notes back and forth between a

CP&P representative and a person who is Deaf or hard of hearing should not be substituted for a certified interpreter as the primary means of communication.

C) Identifying Deaf or Hard of Hearing Clients in the Screening Summary

When a Screener becomes aware that a person involved in a case is Deaf or hard of hearing, he or she clearly notes this fact on the NJS Screening Summary, printable as DCF Form [1-1](#). (When a case record is later established, the Worker makes a note on the front of the file jacket -- "Use of a certified interpreter for the Deaf is required.")

Procedures:

A) Role of Department of Human Services, Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The DHS Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) maintains a registry of certified interpreters.

The purpose of the certified interpreter is to facilitate communication during all phases of an investigation/intervention when a Deaf or hard of hearing person is present, including but not limited to interviewing; completing placement agreements, service plans or other case documents; and during on-going service delivery.

Representatives from DDHH are available during business hours, to consult with CP&P staff regarding the practices of a given provider, and to answer any questions.

The National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf has a Code of Ethics by which all certified interpreters must abide. The Code of Ethics addresses issues including client confidentiality and reasonable fees.

Certified interpreters referred by the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are independent contract vendors who negotiate their own fees.

Certified interpreters charge an hourly rate for their services, may impose a minimum fee, have a cancellation policy, and charge for transportation expenses. These private practitioners accept work from many sources, are in high demand, and tend to book their schedules in advance.

B) Initial Screening 9-8-2008

The identification of a Deaf or hard of hearing person among the principal parties (child, parent, parent's partner, guardian, family member, neighbor, witness, etc.)

involved in an investigation or request for services will often become known during the screening process.

When a Screener becomes aware that a person involved in a case is Deaf or hard of hearing, he or she clearly notes this fact on the NJS Screening Summary, printable as DCF Form [1-1](#). (When a case record is later established, the Worker makes a note on the front of the file jacket -- "Use of a certified interpreter for the Deaf is required.")

During normal working hours SCR advises the Worker to contact the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) directly to secure interpreter services. If interpreter services are needed after normal business hours, the "SPRU" phone number is used to contact SCR. A Screener will assist the SPRU staff by providing certified interpreter contact information from the DDHH certified interpreter list.

C) Obtaining an Interpreter During Regular Business Hours 9-8-2008

During regular business hours, contact the New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to request a certified interpreter. DDHH may be reached at (609) 984-7281 or (800) 792-8339, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. DDHH will suggest an interpreter based on the individual linguistic needs of the principal party of interest and the availability of an appropriately skilled certified interpreter.

D) Obtaining an Interpreter Outside of Regular Business Hours 9-8-2008

After regular business hours, DCF employees are to call SCR using the SPRU phone number. SCR will assist by providing the phone number of a certified interpreter.

E) Case Practice Procedures During an Investigation or Intervention 9-8-2008

During normal working hours, when a Worker first learns that a client/household member is Deaf or hard of hearing while initiating the field response, the Worker notifies his or her Supervisor of the need for a certified interpreter. Contact DDHH directly to identify a certified interpreter who may be available on an emergent basis.

If a certified interpreter cannot be obtained, the Worker consults his or her Supervisor to determine how to proceed with the investigation. The primary focus is to determine if the child can remain safely in the home until such time as the services of a certified interpreter become available. Where a child is at imminent risk, action to protect the child must be taken, as necessary, before CP&P leaves the scene.

If the Worker is uncertain as to a Deaf or hard of hearing individual's communication needs, the Worker provides the individual with written notice of his or her right to a certified interpreter, arranged and provided by CP&P without charge. Use CP&P Form [9-11](#), Interpreter Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. If the Deaf or hard of hearing person indicates a need for an interpreter, the Worker gives written notice that he or she will return when a certified interpreter is secured, once safety of the child has been established.

F) Important Payment Instructions 9-8-2008

Before using an interpreter, the CP&P Worker discusses confidentiality issues with the interpreter, and requests that he or she sign CP&P Form [8-80](#), DCF Confidentiality Agreement (for Non-Employees). See confidentiality policy, [CP&P-IX-G-1-100](#).

Whenever possible the Worker should bring a copy of a completed, approved CP&P Form [16-76](#), Special Approval Request (SAR), signed by the Supervisor and the Local Office Manager (or his or her designee). The Worker provides the service provider with a copy for their records.

- When the interpreter is a “one-time” non-contracted provider, the Worker asks the interpreter to sign the CP&P Form [K-100](#), Client Service Invoice, at the time of service. The Worker then processes the payment within five business days of services being provided.
- If the interpreter is a “contracted” provider, he or she submits charges for the service rendered on his or her monthly CP&P Form [K-100](#), Billing Spreadsheet, to the appropriate Local Office via the “[Secure Billing](#)” process.

In the event the SAR and the CP&P Form [K-100](#) were not provided to the interpreter, the Worker mails a copy of the SAR and the CP&P Form [K-100](#) to the service provider, within five business days, for his or her signature and return. Upon return of the signed CP&P Form [K-100](#) the Worker processes the payment using regular office payment procedures.

When the services of a certified interpreter are needed on an ongoing basis to service a case, and the client family and CP&P are satisfied with the services provided by the certified interpreter identified by DDHH, the assigned Worker and Supervisor are encouraged to negotiate a schedule directly with the interpreter in accordance with the tenets of this policy.

G) Identification of Need for Interpreting Services 7-5-2011

CP&P shall post signs in client waiting areas in Local Offices and Area Offices, giving notice to Deaf and hard of hearing persons of their right to have a certified sign language interpreter.

