

# LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

## FAQS FOR PROFESSIONALS

### WHAT IS THE AGE RANGE OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN THE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION PROGRAM?

Children ages birth to five (5) are eligible to participate in the Language Instruction Program (LIP). Children who have turned five (5) will begin the process of transitioning out of the LIP.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A DEAF LANGUAGE ASSOCIATE (DLA)?

The role of a Deaf Language Associate (DLA) is to support deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind children in developing signed language skills and fostering effective communication throughout the educational journey. The DLAs' primary role is to facilitate communication and promote language acquisition in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

### ARE DLA SCHEDULES FLEXIBLE?

The schedules of the DLA can accommodate the unique needs of the child, family, and educational program. DLAs work flexible hours, up to twenty-five (25) hours per week, in various settings such as childcare centers, preschools, home visits or other environments as applicable.

### WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF DLAs?

DLAs are deaf and hard of hearing adults with strong proficiency in sign language. They have experience working with young children. DLAs actively participate in deaf community events and cultural activities. DLAs receive specialized training through the College of New Jersey (TCNJ), which includes understanding classroom curricula and lesson plans. This training enables DLAs to effectively support language development and seamlessly integrate with classroom activities.

### HOW CAN THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM COLLABORATE WITH DLAs IN THE CLASSROOM?

Effective collaboration involves open communication, sharing progress, and identifying specific language needs to develop tailored strategies. With DLAs work in classrooms for up to five hours a day, it is beneficial for educators to meet regularly with DLAs to align goals and monitor language exposure. Providing DLAs with lesson plans, vocabulary lists, or thematic topics in advance may enhance consistency and planning. The most successful collaborations occur when DLAs are integrated into the planning and reflection processes, ensuring coordinated support for language development.

### CAN DLAs PROVIDE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS OR PARTICIPATE IN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)/504 MEETINGS?

No, the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH)'s LIP is not classified as a related service within an IEP. Therefore, DLAs are not authorized to participate in or provide assessments or summaries of language development for IEP or 504 meetings.



## WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES ARE OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF DLAs?

The DLA's primary responsibility is to provide sign language instruction and supporting language development. Providing language development services requires complete dedication and focus, therefore, DLAs are unable to assist as paraprofessionals, aides, substitutes or interpreters.

## ARE DLAs ABLE TO PROVIDE RESOURCES OR MATERIALS TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT?

Yes, DLAs can recommend specialized resources and materials designed to enhance language development.

## CAN EDUCATIONAL TEAMS REQUEST OBSERVATION AND ASSISTANCE?

Observations and assistance may be requested to monitor the DLAs interactions with children in educational programs and support the language development process. Observations can last up to one (1) hour, with an additional fifteen (15) minutes for assistance. Virtual meetings are also available for check-ins or extra support. To schedule an observation, contact DDHH at [ddhh.communications2@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:ddhh.communications2@dhs.nj.gov).

## HOW ARE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION SERVICES CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE?

DDHH's LIP recognizes and respects the cultural and linguistic diversity of each child's home and community. The program's inclusive approach respects the spoken language of the home and educational program as well as signed languages.

## HOW CAN CAREGIVERS SUPPORT LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AT HOME?

Language acquisition services are available to support the child's language development in-home settings for up to three (3) hours a day. Caregivers can promote language growth by engaging in regular conversations, reading together, singing songs and rhymes in ASL, creating a language-rich environment, encouraging play, modeling language, and practicing patience. DLAs encourage families to be active participants in children's language journeys and model effective language strategies that caregivers can incorporate at home.

## WHAT TRAINING RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR TEACHERS WORKING WITH DLAs?

Training resources may include workshops, online courses, and informational sessions provided by DDHH. To request deaf and hard of hearing sensitivity training, visit: <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/education/dst/>

