

14 DESK CHECKLIST

Working with interpreters

Before, during and after: a one-page desk checklist

For interpreted assessments, therapy, and family meetings. Companion to the BEaR Lab Working with Interpreters manual.

BEFORE

Agree on the task

- ☐ Confirm the child's languages and varieties; ask caregivers' spoken and written language preferences and access needs.
- ☐ Book a qualified interpreter who fits those needs. Arrange bilingual clinical consultation when required.
- ☐ Brief the goal, materials, permitted prompts, and what must be preserved in the child's response.
- ☐ Agree on a pause signal, confidentiality, any recording permissions, and how to flag uncertainty.

DURING

Keep the exchange direct

- ☐ Introduce roles. Speak to the family or child in short, natural segments; allow interpreting time.
- ☐ Invite complete interpretation, including questions and side comments. Make clarifications visible to everyone.
- ☐ Keep the child's original response separate from its interpreted meaning and your clinical judgment.
- ☐ Pause for dialect uncertainty, inaudible speech, added cues, or a changed task. Note what happened.

AFTER

Check and document

- ☐ Ask the family to explain or show the agreed next step in their own way. Repair unclear explanations.
- ☐ Debrief with the interpreter about uncertain wording, dialect, cues, and communication barriers.
- ☐ Record languages, interpreter role, procedures, changes, and limits on scores or conclusions.
- ☐ Give an accessible follow-up plan. Assign who will resolve open questions and when.

The SLP

Plans, analyzes, and makes clinical decisions.

The interpreter

Conveys messages and flags limits or uncertainty.

The family and child

Share meaning, priorities, preferences, and lived experience.

Use one agreed pause phrase

"Pause for clarification. Please tell us what was unclear before we continue." For testing, follow authorized procedures. An unvalidated test translation cannot support a standard score; document changed prompts.

Source: ASHA, Collaborating with interpreters. Full references and cases: companion manual, pp. 2–6. Practice aid, not interpreter training. <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/collaborating-with-interpreters/>