

Can bilingual staff, volunteers, or minors interpret/translate?

The following sections are designed to help Extension staff better understand how to meet language access needs at the local level.

Bilingual staff as translators and interpreters

Unless it is specifically stated as a part of their position duties, bilingual staff have no obligation to translate documents or serve as an interpreter for their colleagues or office.

Bilingual staff are a valuable asset to our organization because they have the ability to communicate directly with LEP audiences in a non-English language. Given the high demand for their language skills and cultural competencies, bilingual staff are sometimes asked by colleagues to provide translation and/or interpretation services that extend beyond the scope of their position.



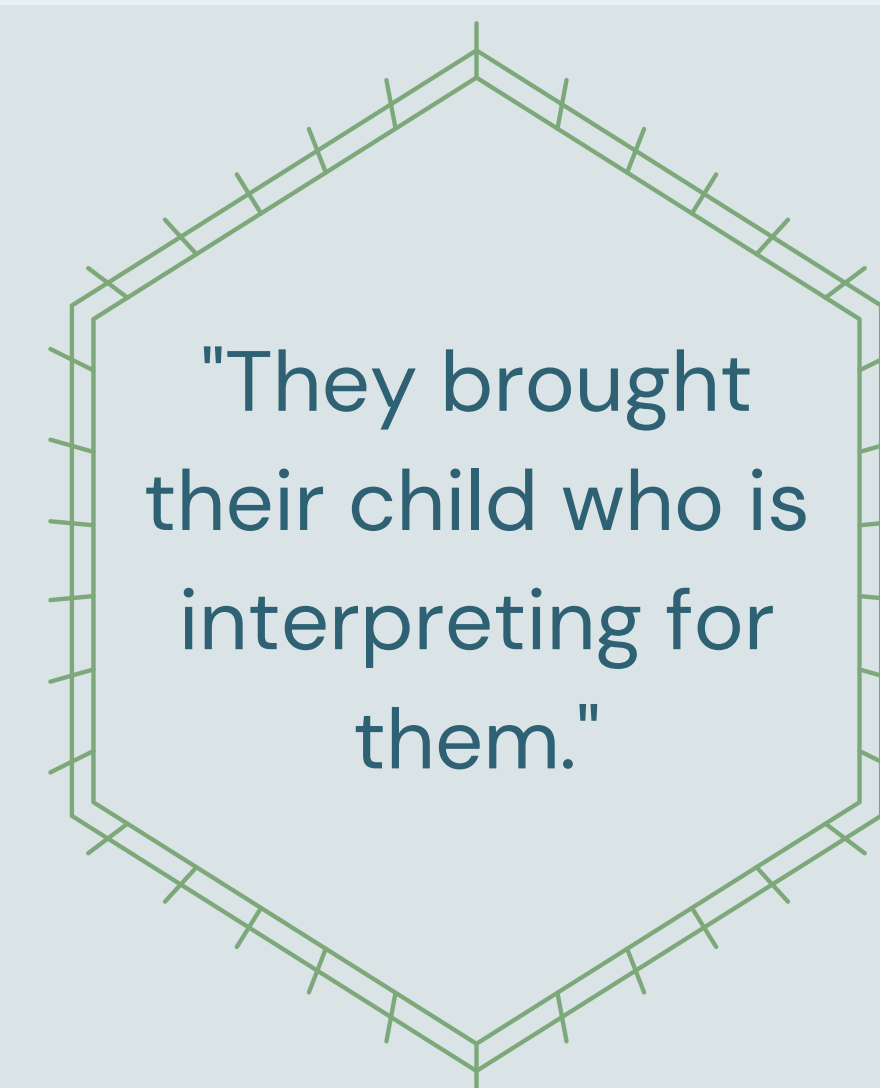
Using community or volunteer interpreters

Educators should discuss the situations or circumstances with the language access coordinator prior to the event.

In some cases, it may be permissible to use adult (over the age of 18) community or volunteer interpreters whose specific role is to provide services during programming events.

The use of minors/children as interpreters

In some cases, a minor (under the age of 18) may assume the role of an interpreter in order to bridge initial communication between two adults. However, this should be strictly limited to circumstances related to spontaneous, informal encounters. Under no circumstances should a minor be asked to provide interpretation services during a programming event, especially for situations that involve our organization's clear legal responsibilities for providing services.



Need language support? Submit a Coaching & Consultation request at <https://blogs.extension.wisc.edu/oaic/>

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance