

## **WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH A DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUAL**

1. All DCF offices have a TTY available. The keyboard is similar to a standard computer keyboard. There is TTY etiquette you need to follow. Type “GA”, which means go ahead, at the end of your sentence to inform the other person it is their turn. Also watch for “GA” which means it is your turn to talk. Type “SK” to end the conversation.
2. Call 711 for relay services. Tell the 711 operator the number you wish to call. The relay operator will dial it and then communicate using a TTY with the individual. Remember to use “go ahead” and “SK” just as you would with using a TTY. Please speak directly to the individual, not the operator.
3. Some individuals use video relay. They utilize a computer equipped with a video camera and use sign language to communicate with an interpreter instead of a TTY. Not many have

access to this, but if they do, it is very helpful for an individual with limited English who is not able to communicate with a TTY.

### **INTERPRETING SERVICES**

CDHI – State of Connecticut  
Commission on the Deaf and  
Hearing Impaired

67 Prospect Avenue, Hartford, CT  
06106-2980

800-708-6796 Voice/TDD  
860-231-8756 Voice/TDD  
860-231-8169 TDD Only  
860-231-8746 FAX  
Interpreting Emergencies 860-231-7623  
Interpreting Department 860-231-1690

FSW (Family Service Woodfield)  
475 Clinton Ave.  
Bridgeport, CT 06605  
203-368-4291 TTY/Voice  
888-676-8554 Toll free and  
emergency

**THERE IS ALSO A  
RESOURCE GUIDE FOR  
SERVICES FOR THE DEAF  
AND HARD OF HEARING.  
YOU CAN FIND THIS  
ONLINE AT....**

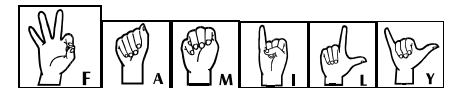
[www.state.ct.us/cdhi/index.htm](http://www.state.ct.us/cdhi/index.htm)

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## **A GUIDE TO WORKING WITH THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING POPULATION**

PREPARED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE STATE OF  
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN  
& FAMILIES

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At some time in your career at DCF, you may have the opportunity to work with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing parent or child. There are specific laws and general guidelines that should be adhered to when working with this population.

### **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

“Deaf and hard of hearing people are entitled to effective communication with state and local government agencies. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. §§12131-12134, forbids discrimination by any public entity.”

“Under the ADA, local and state agencies are required to give equal access and equally effective services to people with disabilities. 28 C.F.R. 35.130. They may not deny people an opportunity to participate in their programs, or give them an opportunity that is less effective than the opportunity given to others. Often, the public entity must provide qualified interpreters, TTYs, visible warning devices, or captioned materials and other auxiliary aids to ensure effective communication with deaf and hard of hearing people.”

### **PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR DCF WORKERS**

ALL visits, which include home visits, court appearances and treatment meetings (ACRS), must include interpreting services. Interpreting services must be provided by a certified interpreter. Certified interpreters are provided by two agencies in the state of CT, CDHI and FSW. You may be able to find other local agencies that have certified interpreters.

### **WHEN REQUESTING AN INTERPRETER**

1. Request a certified interpreter through CDHI or FSW. (numbers listed on back)
2. Always try to obtain the individuals preferred mode of communication prior to scheduling the interpreter. Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals can use a variety of communication to include (ASL – American Sign Language, Oral – lip reads and uses voice, PSE- Pidgin Signed English, Signed English, MLS – Minimal Language Skills or Gestural) If you cannot determine their preferred mode of communication, then ask the

individual when the interpreter is present.

3. Try to schedule interpreting services two weeks in advance. A suggestion is to plan your home visits (even unannounced) a month at a time to ensure the availability of interpreter services for your home visits. Interpreter services are available on an emergency basis.
4. There are different types of interpreters for different uses. Interpreters are certified nationally at different skill levels (medical, legal). Some situations may require the use of more than one interpreter to ensure effective communication between all parties.

### **THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DEAF CULTURE**

There are many barriers to effective communication and they may not all be apparent to you. Try to be mindful of your body language, facial expression, and maintaining eye contact with the deaf individual. When an interpreter is present, look and speak to the individual, not the interpreter.