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
888-676-8544 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
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)

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.