

# THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction

Communication and language are the foundations of learning. Students in an educational setting who are deaf/hard of hearing access communication in a variety of ways. It is important for teams, including students and families, to gather and share information about a student's language, communication, and access. This Communication Plan is a tool that can help facilitate a meaningful discussion as team members embark on this decision-making process.

A series of laws pertain to special education and, specifically, students who are deaf/hard of hearing. These include the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition, in November 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education issued the document "Frequently Asked Questions on Effective Communication for Students With Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools" (DOJ-DOE FAQ). This document reflects many of the questions parents, families, teachers, service providers, and administrators may have regarding the communication needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The Communication Plan, organized into five sections, incorporates effective communication guidance for IEP teams: Language and Communication Modality, Auxiliary Aids and Services, Expanded Support Services, Continuous Communication Access, Least Restrictive Environment and Placement Services. Careful consideration of each aspect of this plan will allow teams to feel confident as they plan for successful and meaningful communication access for students in the educational setting.



"Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode" (*Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities*, 3301-51-07 (L)(1)(b)(iv)).

**1A. The child's/student's primary language is one or more of the following:**

Check all that apply.

Expressive

Receptive

English

American Sign Language

Other native language (Spanish, Somali, etc.);

specify the language \_\_\_\_\_

Is that language spoken or signed? specify \_\_\_\_\_

Combination of several languages

Minimal language skills, no primary language Comments:

**1B. The child's/student's primary communication mode is one or more of the following.**

Check all that apply and if more than one applies, explain.

**Expressive**

Spoken language

Cued Speech/Cued English

Fingerspelling

Gestures

Tactile/objects

Picture symbols/pictures/photographs

Home signs

Manually coded English (Signing Exact English, etc.)

American Sign Language

Conceptual signs (e.g., Pidgin Signed English, Conceptually Accurate Signed English)

Written

Other: please explain Comments:

**Receptive**

Auditory

Speechreading

Tactile/objects

Home signs

American Sign Language

Written

Other: please explain Comments:

Cued Speech/Cued English

Gestures

Picture symbols/pictures/photographs

Manually Coded English (Signing Exact English, etc.)

Conceptual signs (e.g., Pidgin Signed English, Conceptually Accurate Signed English)

“The school must honor the individual’s choice unless the school can prove that an alternative auxiliary aid or service provides communication that is as effective as that provided to students without disabilities and affords an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the service, program, or activity” (DOJ-DOE FAQ, p. 9).

**2A. Does the student require auxiliary aids and services, such as qualified interpreters, notetakers, transcription services, etc., to achieve communication that is as effective as communication for individuals without disabilities?** [ADA Title II 28 C.F.R. 35.104(1)] (DOJ-DOE FAQ, p. 7).

Yes

Please explain how the IEP team is ensuring the student is receiving communication that is as effective as what nondisabled peers are receiving and specify what auxiliary aids and services the student is receiving in an onsite and/or online learning environment.

No

By answering no, you are indicating that the school can demonstrate the particular auxiliary aid or service (please list below) is not needed or would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens, and the school must provide a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion and provide a satisfactory alternative auxiliary aid or service (ADA Title II 28 C.F.R. 35.164, DOJ-DOE FAQ, pp. 12-13).

**2B. Are the auxiliary aids and services provided by the school primarily based on the preference of the student with disabilities, or his/her parents/guardian?** (DOJ-DOE FAQ, p. 19).

Yes (continue to Question 3) Comments:

No (Stop here and discuss with the student and/or guardians their preference for primary language and primary communication mode.)

Comments:

How was this assessed?

**2C. Are the auxiliary aids and services provided in a timely manner in an onsite and/or online learning environment?** [ADA Title II 28 C.F.R. 35.160 (b)(2)].

Yes

No

If no, please explain why aids and services have not been provided in a timely manner:



How was this assessed?

**3C. Mentors/peers who are deaf/hard of hearing can have a positive impact for everyone – child, parent, and professional. Document who on the team will be responsible for arranging adult role model connections and opportunities for the student.**

Issues considered: Action plan, if any:

**3D. The teachers, interpreters, and other specialists providing services and auxiliary aids outlined in the Communication Plan must have demonstrated proficiency in and be able to accommodate for the child's/student's primary communication mode or language and communicate effectively in an onsite and/or online learning environment.** Qualified Personnel: Operating Standards: (B)(50) [ADA Title II 28 C.F. R. 35.160(a) (1)].

Issues considered:

Action plan, if any:

How was this assessed?

**4A. Academic instruction, school services, and extracurricular activities in which the child/student participates have been identified and will be presented with effective and fully accessible communication. Consideration of the entire school day, daily transition times, and what the student needs for communication that is as effective as what peers receive in all activities will allow more complete and meaningful educational benefits for the student.** Communication: CFR § 300.324(a)(2)(iv), Non-academic settings: CFR § 300.101 FAPE [ADA Title II 28 C.F. R. 35.104 (1)] [ADA Title II 28 C.F. R. 35.160(a) (1)].

Issues considered:

Action plan, if any:

**4B. Is there an alternate plan in place to maintain effective communication during academic instruction, school services, and extracurricular activities with the student if any of the following events happen?**

Interpreter is absent

Hearing aids/cochlear implant(s) is/are not working (batteries are dead, components missing, left at home, etc.)

FM system is not working

Closed captions are not available, including videos posted online or digital curricula

Trained notetaker is absent

Real-time captioning services are not available

Assistive technology is not working (e.g., tablet)

Issues considered:

Action plan, if any:



**4C. How will the student be effectively communicated with during emergency situations such as fire alarms, practice drills, tornado alerts, lockdowns, emergency virtual instruction changes due to health reasons, and other evacuation drills, etc.?**

Issues considered: Please describe:

**5A. Did the team discuss which educational placement provides the student with the most appropriate and continuous access to language and communication throughout the student's day? Was an accurate and complete explanation of the continuum of educational placement options provided and considered based on the student's individual communication and LRE needs? IDEA mandates that educational placement for each student with a disability be only as restrictive as the student's individual needs require. The basic regulatory requirement is that students are only removed from general education classrooms if they cannot be educated satisfactorily in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services.** Placement Determination: CFR § 300.115 300.116, LRE: CFR § 300.114.

Were the following options presented?

General education classroom

Special education classroom

Program within a school district for students who are deaf /hard of hearing

Special school for students who are deaf /hard of hearing

Other

Issues considered:

Action plan, if any: