



Advocates for Children of New York
Protecting every child's right to learn

Translation and Interpretation Services in New York City Public Schools

In New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), parents who do not speak English have a right to free translation and interpretation services. These services help parents communicate with their children's schools and other NYCPS offices, and help parents participate in their children's education.

Parents have the right to have their children's school records and other important documents translated into their language and to have interpreters available at meetings with school and NYCPS staff.

Who has a right to translation and interpretation services?

All NYCPS parents whose preferred language is not English have a right to free translation and interpretation services.

Parents should never be told to bring their own interpreters, and children should never be asked to translate or interpret for their parents.

In which languages are services available?

Translation and interpretation must be available in the twelve most common languages other than English – Albanian, Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, and Uzbek.

However, all parents, including those who speak other languages, may request translation and interpretation services in their preferred language.

When is NYCPS required to provide translation?

NYCPS must provide translation of all documents containing important information about your child's education in a timely manner. This includes:

- General notices, such as information about parent teacher conferences, student and parent handbooks, and school application forms
- Documents about your child, such as report cards and promotion in doubt letters
- All special education documents including Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and evaluations. For more information, see AFC's [Special Education Information Tip Sheet](#)

When is NYCPS required to provide interpretation?

NYCPS must provide interpretation services so that you can communicate with school staff and NYCPS staff about your child's education. For example, schools must provide interpretation services at

parent-teacher conferences and IEP meetings. Family Welcome Centers must provide interpreters when parents are enrolling their children in school. Superintendents' offices must provide interpreters when parents call with school-related questions.

How do I get these services?

You should request translation and interpretation services directly from your child's school or the NYCPS office that you are talking to about your child's education. For interpretation, NYCPS may provide interpretation in-person or over-the-phone. Over-the-phone interpretation is available in more than 200 different languages from 8am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday.

Your child's school must determine your preferred language and whether you need help communicating with the school within 30 days of your child starting school. Your child's school must also keep a record of your preferred language.

All Schools must give you a copy of the Bill of Parent Rights and Responsibilities, which includes information about your right to translation and interpretation services. All schools must also post signs clearly stating that translation and interpretation services are available.

Do schools know that they must provide me with translation and interpretation services?

Yes! All schools should have Language Access Coordinators who educate school staff about their obligation to provide parents with translation and interpretation services.

What should I do if I am not provided translation and interpretation services?

If you are not provided translation or interpretation or receive poor quality services, email hello@school.nyc.gov, call the NYCPS complaint line at (718) 935-2013, or call 311.

Still have more questions?
Please Call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline
Monday through Thursday • 10 am to 4 pm
1-866-427-6033 (toll free)

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