

Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Current as of February 2014

Terms in blue ink are defined in Glossary

CYF 017 – Communications Policies

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Children, Youth and Families' (CYF) is committed to providing high quality services that are accessible to all, culturally relevant, and demonstrate respect for individual and family preferences.

CYF uses internal, contracted, and community-based supports to communicate effectively with families who do not speak or read English as a primary language or have speech, vision or hearing disabilities.

Caseworkers are trained to recognize and try to minimize the possibility that interpreters may unintentionally translate conversations with slightly different meanings. Some words or concepts may be difficult to interpret and translate, as when there is no equivalent in American Sign Language (ASL), etc.

When requested or needed, a wide range of assistance is available for staff and families.

Telephone

- CYF has a Text Telephone, or TTY 412-473-2017, to communicate with people who use a TTY device (*usually people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired*).
- Casework staff also uses a Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), provided toll-free in Pennsylvania (currently by AT&T). Operators type what is said so the other person can read spoken words on his or her TTY display. The other person will type back a response, which the TRS operator will read aloud to be heard over the telephone.

AT&T TRS Customer Service: 800-682-8706(V) and 800-682-8786(TTY)

800-654-5988 (Voice)

800-654-5984 (TTY)

1-800-229-5746 (Speech to Speech English)

1-866-260-9470 (Speech to Speech Spanish)

- Language Line is often utilized to provide immediate translations in a large number of languages.

For a demonstration, call 1-800-996-8808 or see www.language.com

Documents

- DHS contracts with agencies that provide Certified Translators to translate documents for families. Translators may be provided with a pre-translated glossary to promote understanding and consistency of complex terminology.

See CYF Parent's Handbook translated into Spanish

The (Federal) Children's Bureau's "Child Welfare Terms": [English to Spanish](#) (link) [Spanish to English](#) (link)

- For those with visual disabilities, CYF will have all written documents translated into large print, Braille or read onto audiocassette tapes, as the person prefers; and

In Person

Interpreters are used for face-to-face interviews and court hearings.

- Children or other family members are not used to interpret for parents, etc.
- The gender of the interpreter may be considered for the comfort of family member(s)

- Interpreters are scheduled by Juvenile Court Administration for all Court hearings

DHS has compiled a list of cultural as well as Immigrant/International resources for staff and the public, which can be accessed through the DHS website.