

Don't treat a child as an interpreter

Why you should never treat a child as an interpreter:

- Interpreting is a complicated job with a lot of emotion and responsibility.
- A child is a child and not developed enough to do job of an interpreter.
- Children need time to develop and grow-up naturally, without the same responsibility that adults have.
- Children will feel isolated and different if they have to behave like a grown-up and interpret for adults. They should be outside playing with children of the same age, not involved with complicated adult things.
- If a child has to interpret complicated information they may not understand and this can damage their confidence and emotions.
- When you use an interpreter the information and language can often be very grown-up and serious (like at the doctors or hospital). A child should not be hearing this information because their emotions and development can suffer.



- If a child interprets for their parents it will make the relationship confused. The child will have control and be looking after their parents, but it should be parents in control and looking after children.

Example:

A Deaf mother takes her young hearing child to the doctor. The doctor says:

"I am referring you to a specialist urgently. There is a lump in your breast and we need to do some tests to check whether it is malignant"

How can a young child cope with the language and the emotions that this would bring?