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A Child Advocacy Center  
Founded 1977

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## **AUXILIARY AIDS PLAN**

Manatee Children's Services (MCS) will take appropriate steps to ensure those persons with disabilities, including persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, sight impaired; have other sensory or manual impairments, or those who have limited English proficiency, have an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities programs and other benefits. The procedures outlined below are intended to ensure effective communication with clients involving their treatment, services, and benefits. The procedures also apply to, among other types of communication, communication of information contained in important documents including client rights and treatment consents. All necessary auxiliary aids and services shall be provided without cost to the person being served.

All DCF Contracted Service Provider personnel (hereafter referred to as "staff") will be provided written notice of this procedure and staff that may have direct contact with individuals with disabilities will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of interpreters.

**Single Point of Contact:** The Single Point of Contact, Cheryl Andrews, will ensure effective communication with Deaf or hard-of-hearing customers or companions in accordance with Section 504 and the ADA. The Single Point of Contact shall ensure that employees are aware of the requirements, roles, responsibilities, and contact points associated with compliance with Section 504 and the ADA.

**Training:** All direct service staff shall receive training on how to provide auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency within 60 days of their employment start date. MCS' direct service staff shall receive an annual refresher training on auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency, along with the use of TTY phone and accessing the area's available auxiliary aid resources. Such training documentation shall be maintained on each employee.



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**Provision of Auxiliary Aids and Services:** MCS will at all times recognize that the client or their companion's preference is the primary consideration in determining what auxiliary aids or services to provide. If communication through a specific auxiliary aid or service is deemed to be ineffective, staff will ask the client or companion to determine a more effective auxiliary aid or service for communication. Documentation shall be made in the client's file regarding the attempt to improve the effectiveness of auxiliary aids and services. If a client or companion is Deaf or hard of hearing, MCS staff shall obtain auxiliary aids according to the communication assessment and the request for services on a 24/7 basis. All ASL interpreters' certifications shall be verified. Verification can be found on the Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf website <https://www.fridcentral.org>. A companion is described as:

- A person whom the client indicates should communicate with staff about the client, such as a person who participates in any treatment decision, a person who plays a role in communicating the client's needs, or a person who helps the client act on information provided.
- A person legally authorized to make healthcare or legal decisions on behalf of the client; or
- Such other person with whom the staff would ordinarily and regularly communicate about the client.

Staff that is unfamiliar with the auxiliary aid or service requested shall contact their Single Point of Contact (SPOC), 504/ADA Coordinator (Civil Rights Officer), Sharon Pimley-Fong, 813-558-5656, or their Supervisor for assistance in locating appropriate resources to ensure effective communication with clients, companions and customers of MCS.

**Provision of Interpreters in a Timely Manner:** MCS staff shall provide interpreters for patients and companions who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing in a timely manner in accordance to the following standards:

- Non-Scheduled Interpreter Requests: For any emergency situation that is not a scheduled appointment, staff shall make an interpreter available as soon as

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possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours from the time the patient or companion or staff requests an interpreter, whichever is earlier. If the situation is not an emergency, staff shall offer to schedule an appointment, and provide an interpreter when necessary for effective communication, as convenient to the patient or companion, but as least by the next business day.

- **Scheduled Interpreter Requests:** For scheduled events, staff shall make a qualified interpreter available at the time of the scheduled appointment. If an interpreter fails to appear for the appointment, staff shall take whatever additional actions possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours after the scheduled appointment.

**Auxiliary Aids Documentation:** MCS staff shall document the client or companion's preferred method of communication and any requested auxiliary aids and service provided in the client's file. All related documents and forms evidencing when and how MCS provided auxiliary aids and services to clients or companions shall be retained within the client's file for seven (7) years.

**Denied Auxiliary Requests:** Documentation, with supporting justification, must be made if any request was not honored. MCS' Chief Executive Officer is the only person that can deny auxiliary aid requests made by a client or companion. If a staff person is not familiar with an auxiliary aid request, they will contact the SPOC for information as well as ask their supervisor for any information that they may need to secure this aid. The cost of any auxiliary aid is the responsibility of the agency and not the participant.

**Referrals:** If clients or companions are referred to other agencies, MCS must ensure that the receiving agency is notified of the patient or companion's preferred method of communication and any auxiliary aid or service needs if desired by the participant and they have signed the proper Release of Information form.

**Signage:** The SPOC will ensure that conspicuous Notices which provide information about the availability of appropriate auxiliary aids and services at no-cost to the Deaf or hard-of-hearing clients or companions are posted near where people enter MCS' facilities. The SPOC's name and contact information will be on the Deaf and hard of hearing poster.



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**HHS Reports:** MCS shall submit HHS Reports monthly to the Contract Manager at the Safe Children's Coalition, as well as any other DCF Contractor.

**Florida Video Relay 7-1-1:** Through the Florida Relay Service, people who use specialized telephone equipment can communicate with people who use standard telephone equipment. To call Florida Relay, dial 7-1-1, or use the appropriate toll free numbers below:

1-800-955-8771 (TTY)

1-800-955-8770 (Voice)

1-877-955-8773 (Spanish)

1-877-955-8707 (French Creole)

**Video Remote Interpreting:** Through a video remote interpreter people can use an interpreter via technology to communicate with a client or companion instead of an interpreter being on site, in person. This is a good resource for emergency situations with limited time to get an in person interpreter as well as if there are few local community resources for certified interpreters. To find a VRI provider log on to: <http://clearviewinnovations.com> or call Clear View Innovations at: 410-491-9172

**CART-Captioning Real Time and Providers:** This is the simultaneous conversion of spoken words to text, through computer assisted transcription or court reporting, and displaying the text on a video screen. This communication service is beneficial to those who are Deaf or hard of hearing that do not use sign language or for whom assistive listening devices are ineffective. Contact 941-359-8100, AmeriCaption, Inc. for service information.

For copies of forms and assessments relating to this plan (see attached English samples), log on to the Florida Department of Children and Families website at: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/about-us/services-deaf-and-hard-hearing/forms-publications>. Forms are available in a variety of languages.

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