

First contact happens in English only

Area of work: Accessibility, language access, and inclusive operations

The situation

Families calling a DSD intake line reach an English-only greeting and a voicemail. Interpretation is available once a staff member calls back, often days later.

What to notice first

- Language access planned per document misses the first phone call.
- Delay is a burden that falls on people who already carry more.
- This is a program-level planning question, not a translation request.

Questions to ask before acting

1. How does a person who does not use English reach a human in their language on the first try?
2. Which languages does the data owner show, and what does the data not show?
3. Who are the trusted messengers for the communities most affected?

Practical next moves

- **Language and cultural access planning aid** — program page [/resources/ja-language-cultural-access-planning](#)
- **Language access checklist** — program page [/resources/ja-language-access-checklist](#)

Who to involve

Bring the plan to your language access coordinator and the intake line's owner. CLAS standards and DHS language access practice govern the decision.