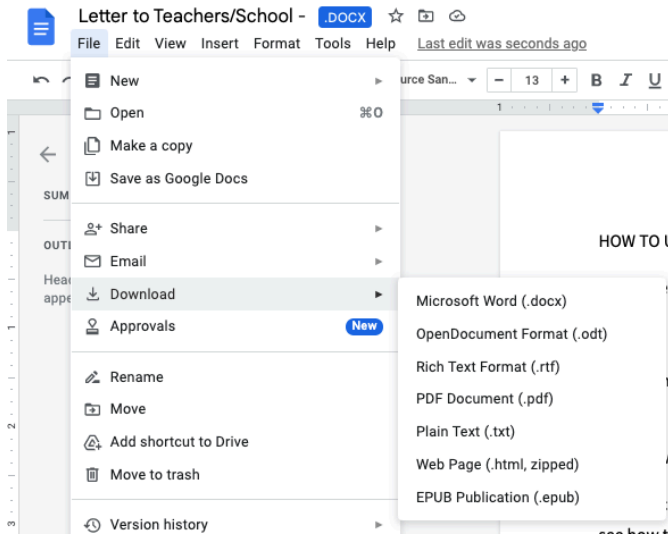




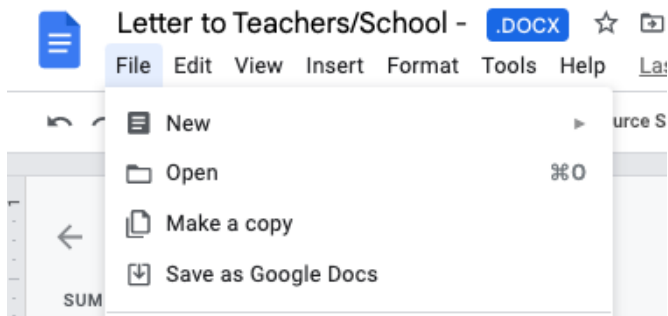
## HOW TO USE THE LETTER TEMPLATE:

- 1) Go to “**File**” in the menu above, and select “**Download**”. Then click on the arrow next to “Download” to download the preferred file to edit and customize to your own. We recommend .docx as the format for your copy.



or

- 2) Go to “**File**” in the menu above, and select “**Make a copy**”. You will be able to name the file and make a copy to work on.





Dear [name of teacher],

Hi! We're [NAME of your partner/spouse] and [YOUR NAME], [NAME of your child]'s parents. We're [Deaf/DeafBlind/Hard of Hearing].

We're excited to see what this year will bring for [NAME of your child] and can't wait to see how they grow in your classroom.

This letter explains who we are and what our Deaf culture looks like, so you can understand us and [NAME of your child] better. It will also explain behaviors that are normal in Deaf culture and accommodations that work best, so we can have a successful school year.

We use American Sign Language (ASL) as our primary language at home. ASL and English are two unique languages, and the cultural differences sometimes clash.

[NAME of your child] is a "Child of Deaf Adults" (CODA), and he/she/they have certain behaviors that are perfectly acceptable in Deaf culture but may seem odd in everyday lives with hearing people.

### **Eye Contact**

Eye contact is one of the most basic forms of communication necessities in Deaf culture. It helps us understand each other, so we're used to maintaining eye contact when communicating. You may find CODAs looking directly at you when you're talking, and this is perfectly normal because CODAs are used to it in Deaf households. This is their way of expressing they are listening to what you are saying.

### **Getting Your Attention**



Calling people by their name is the common way to get someone's attention in hearing culture. When [NAME of your child] needs our attention, they use ways that seem unconventional in hearing culture. Here are some examples:

- Waving hands vigorously
- Turning lights on and off
- Stomping on the floor or banging on the table to create vibrations

If our CODA happens to do these things in your classroom, please be aware they are still adjusting to your classroom rules and expectations. If this becomes a problem, please let us know so that we can work together to redirect their actions to support both classroom and at-home communication styles.

To get [NAME of your child]'s attention, you may need to lightly tap on their shoulders if they don't respond right away.

### **Sign Language Interpretation for Meetings**

We kindly request you not to ask [NAME of your child] to interpret for us during parent-teacher conferences or school-sponsored events. He/She/They is a student, and placing the responsibility of interpreting on young children is unethical and often puts undue burdens on them.

For parent-teacher conferences or school-sponsored events, we need ASL interpreters to be present so that we can participate as parents and fully support [NAME of your child]. Please familiarize yourself with the school district's interpreter request procedure, and if our attendance is confirmed, proceed to arrange for an ASL interpreter.



Please share the contact information of the individual coordinating our ASL interpreters for our meetings so that we can communicate with them as needed. Last-minute plans make it difficult to schedule an ASL interpreter, so the school should make arrangements for interpreting services in advance.

If you are in need of interpreting services for your school meetings, Convo, a Deaf-owned communications company, would be perfect for this. You can check them out at [convorelay.com/vi](https://convorelay.com/vi) to learn more about their services.

### **Other Important Things to Know**

- Occasionally, CODAs may have moments where they sign without using their voice. You can gently remind them to “turn on their voice”.
- CODAs may need more visual assistance than their hearing peers, such as pointing to guide them where they should go and writing instructions on the whiteboard versus speaking instructions out loud.
- CODAs can sometimes feel shy or embarrassed about using ASL at school with their parents, as other students can pick on them for using a different language.
  
- We encourage you to explain to the class that ASL is a beautiful language that anyone can learn, and CODAs will use ASL when their parents are around.

### **Calling us using Video Relay Service (VRS)**

Sometimes there are Deaf parents with CODAs that prefer to use VRS to communicate with their teachers. VRS allows deaf people who use sign language to communicate with voice telephone users through video apps and a high-speed Internet connection. A video sign language interpreter relays the conversation at no cost to the callers. To learn more about VRS, [click here](#).



Thank you for reading and learning more about Deaf culture! Please reach out to us if you have any questions or if you want to discuss more how Deaf culture or how to support our CODA.

Sincerely,

[Your name and your partner's name]

[Your contact information]