

# Lisa Kurtz: Second Nationally Certified Intervener

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Lisa Kurtz, the second intervener to earn national certification through the NICE ([National Intervener Certification E-Portfolio](#)) system, became a sign language interpreter in 2008 and worked as an educational and freelance interpreter before embarking on a journey to become an intervener. In 2012, she began working at the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) as an interpreter and was asked to cross-train as an intervener. Since that time she has worked in a primarily academic setting with a young lady who has CHARGE syndrome.

Lisa uses American Sign Language and her knowledge of English to expand and increase her student's ability to communicate. She contrasts her work as an interpreter with that of an intervener by saying that an interpreter facilitates the information she is given and is less hands-on with students, while an intervener is assigned to one student and provides information, but also expands upon it to help the student make connections.

As the second individual to successfully complete the NICE process, Lisa said it feels a little surreal. "This is new," she told me, "and there's no precedent. Otherwise, it's exciting. It's nice to have recognition for all the hard work I've been doing over the past 5 years. I'm hoping I can help

promote the certificate and that interveners will be recognized as something more than paraprofessionals.”

When asked about her experience with the NICE process, Lisa said she felt as though she had a bit of an advantage over other candidates because she participated in the group that helped test NICE and knew how to use the system before beginning the certification process. She thought the platform was easy to use, but admitted that when she first saw all of the CEC standards, it was a “very long and daunting list.” However, she found that many topics overlapped. “When you start looking for documentation that fits, you find that it really fits many different standards.”

A portfolio is made up of “artifacts” that are developed by the candidate. Lisa’s portfolio contained about 35 artifacts and she reported that creating them required a great deal of self-reflection. Each artifact must include an explanation written by the candidate. Lisa felt that the writing was beneficial to her, but it was “*a lot* of writing. You find documentation for your artifact and then must “explain how it relates to the competencies.”

Lisa’s words of wisdom? “Use your mentor!” She believes that everyone should be in constant contact with their mentor and use them to help find documentation that shows they have met the competencies. She said it also helps to, “have an extra set of eyes to look at your portfolio to make sure what you’re doing makes sense to others.” Lisa credits her mentor, Cindi Robinson, with helping her through the process. “Cindi,” she said, “helped me put things into words.”

Overall, Lisa says that the journey toward certification was worth it and helped her become a better intervener and communicator. It made it easier for her to talk about her work with other people. “That’s the biggest way I’ve grown in my work,” she said. “To be able to explain what I do to others more clearly and concisely. Hopefully it will be helpful with career advancement, too.”

