

Baby Sign

25 Early Signs to Use Today

Why Sign?

- 5 good reasons to use signs before words
 - Typical children learn signs before words
 - Gestures help establish social skills
 - Gestures help establish cognitive skills
 - Our brains process signs better
 - Empirical Evidence

Reason 1

- Virtually all children who are learning to talk use gestures before they use spoken words
 - Language – Gestural, Oral, Written
 - The ability to purposefully communicate develops around 6 months of age – well before muscular control for speech develops
 - Producing gestures only requires control of large muscle groups in comparison to muscles needed to speak

Reason 2

- Gestures/Signs help establish critical social skills for communication
 - Early gestures help babies connect with their environment and develop social skills before they can produce words
 - Children learn they can control their environment through communication
 - Powerful catalyst to continue to communicate

Reason 3

- Gestures/Sign help establish critical cognitive skills for communication
- Imitation
 - A cognitive foundation for learning language is imitation
 - Children who have difficulty imitating can be guided hand over hand
 - Children can compare their gestures to adults

Reason 3 cont...

- Symbolic Function – critical cognitive pre-requisite
 - The ability to understand that one thing can stand for (represent) another
 - Words are symbols for their referents...gestures are too!

Reason 4

- Children's brains process gestures and signs more efficiently than words
 - some children have a difficult time retaining a spoken word long enough to process it (they forget it as soon as they hear it)
 - If we show a sign we can hold the visual for as long as the child needs
 - Signs stimulate both the visual and auditory neural pathways in the brain
 - Visual cortex matures faster than the auditory cortex

Reason 5

- Studies have proven that using sign to help children learn to talk is beneficial
 - Studies from infants, to toddlers, to school age children all show that children said words more quickly and learned more words when sign was used

Some things to consider...

- Introducing signs will not increase your child's language abilities
- Sign during meaningful times
- Sign with both your voice on and off
- Use signs with hand shapes that are developmentally appropriate
- Make signing FUN!

Now Lets get Signing!



Mom



Dad



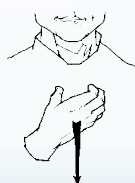
Eat



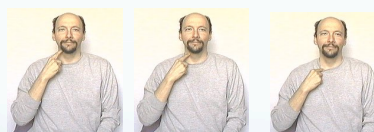
Drink



Hungry



Thirsty



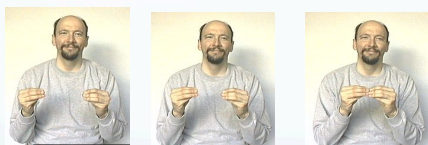
Milk



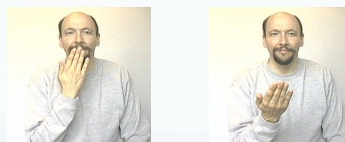
All Done/Finish



More



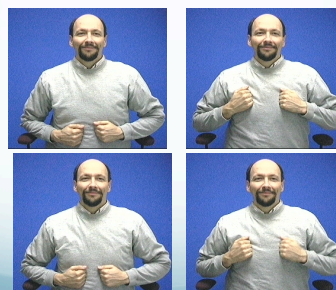
Thank you



Please



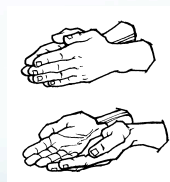
Bath



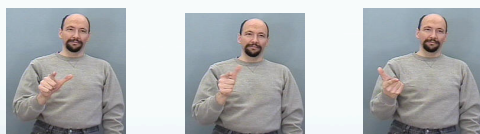
Again



Book



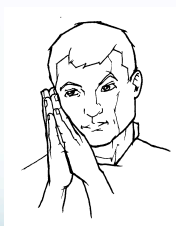
“Turn”-the-page



Where



Bed



Ball



Go



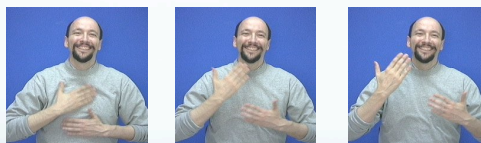
Stop



Play



Happy



Sad



My/Mine



Your



Time



References

- Images from Lifeprint.com – January 2013
- Robertson, S. (2007) *Using Sign to Facilitate Oral Language: Building a Case with Parents*. ASHA Convention. Handouts
- Seal, B. (2010). About Baby Signing. The ASHA Leader, 15(13). Online only