

Beginning Baby Sign

Why Baby Sign? Because it allows for communication with your child at an earlier age than most babies develop verbally. Motor skills develop quicker than language skills. Plus, it reinforces the spoken word, and allows for an easier transition to speaking.

A good time to start signing for your child is around 6 months. They will begin receptive language (understanding) then, but the expressive language (responsive) won't develop until their motor development catches up to their cognitive development. I like to "say and sign" at the same time to reinforce both "languages".

Children will develop their own way of "pronouncing" signs, just the same way they may mispronounce a spoken word. But just as you understand their baby talk, you will understand their meaning when they modify a sign.

Most babies will drop their sign once their language develops, and becomes automatic. For bilingual children, it provides a bridge between the two languages. (Ahhh! This same sign means that word, and that word too!)

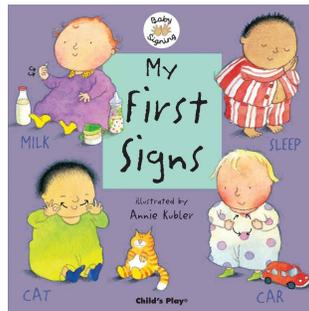
Many of the signs are intuitive, like hot, cold, thirsty, all done, some are visual representations, like cookie, milk, sleep, cat. Others are a little more abstract like mama, daddy, hurt, or help.

Another important component of signing is using a lot of facial expression. This reinforces the intent of your communication and makes the sign more easily understood.

Many of the little prepositions etc. are left out- just the content words remain, so it simplifies the language while retaining the meaning.

I love to sing with the babies, and many songs are easily “translated” into sign. Some on our website are The More We Get Together, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, If You’re Happy and You Know It.

There are lots of books out there on this subject, but this board book would be my first choice! There are also great videos available in most libraries. Annie Kubler is the author of this great series, pictured below.



I tend to focus on signing feelings as the frustration of not being able to communicate leads to negative behavioral modes of communication.

Here is the link to visual charts for reminders and other signs.

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/chart/?v=7516fd43adaa>

Here is the link to our website where Ms. Chris reads and signs a book on feelings, as well as a book on animal signs. <https://youtu.be/gAGExv7Kxg0>

She also sings and signs those songs, if you want to sing along with your baby, and practice together.

<http://www.sandwichpartnership.com/story-circle/>