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**Baby Signing FAQ and more**

Are you looking for a way to reduce frustration and understand what your child wants and needs? Did you know baby signing is a simple yet effective form of communication to understand your child before language has developed?

**What is baby signing?** Baby signing is a set of simple hand gestures (or signs) that coincide with common words you use with your child every day. It helps your child to communicate by expressing their needs and mimicking your gestures before speech develops.

**When can I start signing with my child?** Baby signing has shown to be effective from as young as 3-4 months and can be taught from any age before a child is speaking to get the most amount of benefits.

**What signs should I start with?** Choose signs that are important, meaningful, and useful to your child. These include signs that express their everyday needs, such as eating, drinking and sleeping for young babies and extra signs when they start navigating the world around them such as love, going out and play times.

**How do I start? Speak** and **sign** at the same time. It’s important to always say the word out loud when using a sign and put emphasis on the spoken word/ sign to ensure your child sees the connection.

**Will baby signing delay speech?** No, baby signing has shown to enhance speech development as long as you **say the word** when signing it, as a child’s words will eventually replace the sign. Not saying the word can imply to the child that they only need to sign to communicate with you.

**How often do I use the signs?** For best results, ensure that your signs are consistent and are being used daily. **Repetition** is key: By seeing the same sign over and over, your child will start to learn and mimic your signs quicker, however it is important to remember that all children develop at a different pace so they may sign earlier or later than others.

**My child is showing signs of speech/developmental delay, can I use baby signing with them?** Yes, however we are not speech pathologists so we **recommend seeing a registered speech pathologist** or paediatrician to give you the correct tools and information going forward.

**Responding to your child.**Your child is more likely to learn a sign when it has been acknowledged and the signs are used consistently throughout their daily routines.

When you notice your child starts identifying your sign or mimicking signs with their hands, it’s important to acknowledge or say the word of the sign you think they are trying to express ie ‘Oh you’re finished?’ or ‘Would you like some milk’ showing the signs back to the child, to show you’re starting to understand them(even if you can’t determine what they’re expressing just yet) and showing that you’re watching and excited about the progress gives them motivation to keep expressing themselves.

**Get whole family involved.** The more people around your child who are using the signs, the quicker your child will start to understand and the less frustrated they will be in everyday situations. Children feel happier when they’re being understood and giving them this gift to bond with everyone around them is incredible. Watching other people learn and sign to your children is exciting for everyone involved.

**How to see results promptly.** By incorporating and using baby signing in your everyday routine it will assist your child to recognise signs and start signing back.

For children under 6 months start with popular basic signs, e.g. milk, nappy, bed and finished.

For children from 6 months continue with basic signs and add - drink, eat, going out, emotions.

For children from 18 months above and add signs like - weather, manners, concepts and colours.

**Baby signing guidelines.**

While using baby sign it’s important to say the word as you are signing it and put emphasis on the key word, for example:

* Would you like some milk
* You are tired, time for a bed now
* Would you like more drink or you are all done

**Benefits of baby signing include:**

* Helping to understand your child’s needs, wants and ideas
* Reducing frustration (for both child and parent)
* Enhancing speech development
* Enriching your child’s feeling of belonging and participation
* Building confidence and self-esteem
* Stimulating intellectual and emotional development

**Disclaimer**

Our team at Sign with Me uses a combination of signs from AUSLAN (Australian Sign Language) KWS(Key Word Sign) and simple visual gestures that have proven to be effective in communicating with children, however we do not claim to be certified sign language teachers as we are using a combination of gestures.

**Our Mission**

Here at Sign with Me we believe communication is the key to understanding your child from an early age before speech has developed.

We give parents the tools to create a special bond with their children through using simple hand gestures, along with music and songs in a fun, family-friendly environment that nurtures their needs. We incorporate signs that are relevant to age and useful in everyday life for the whole family to enjoy.