



Baby Signing

EYFS Links

Baby signing has been around for the past 30-40 years, and has become increasingly popular in the UK over the last 10 years. Evidence shows that infants who sign understand language, have larger vocabularies, and learn to talk sooner compared with those who have not signed.

Baby signing is a form of communication with your baby before he/she has the ability to talk, using extended gestures such as British Sign Language (BSL) or Makaton.

Babies naturally use a combination of gestures and sounds to help their parents understand them. Baby signing uses standardised signs based on BSL and teaches babies and toddlers the basic signs relevant to their daily routines to enable them to express their needs or thoughts.

Babies and toddlers understand a lot more than we give them credit for, but they are often held back by their physical inability to talk. However, their ability to use their hands to gesture or form signs can enable them to communicate their needs or thoughts much sooner.

An 8 week programme will ensure all the appropriate signs relevant to babies every day routines are introduced and taught through the use of songs and nursery rhymes. Each week will cover a different topic such as; basic needs, bed time, animals, family, weather etc. The wonderful use of props, musical instruments, bubbles etc. enhances sessions and ensures greater interaction for babies and toddlers.

Expected positive outcomes:

- Empowers babies to communicate earlier
- Boosts self-esteem for baby as they are able to express their needs
- Reduces frustrations for both baby and parent
- Complements language skills and speech development
- Enhances bonding and interaction
- Helps parents understand what child wants/needs
- Social development and turn taking is improved
- Teaches parents the skill of signing
- Skill for life – BSL is a language in its own right!

"...Baby Signing. It can reduce frustration, tantrums and misery, and – best of all- it can help you gain an insight into your baby's world long before speech begins."

Dr Joseph Garcia 2005

Links to:

Communication and language: Encourages early speech and language development. Develops language through the use of songs and nursery rhymes.

Physical development: Opportunities for children to enjoy movement. They develop coordination and control through use of musical instruments and other toys.

Personal /social development: Develops social skills and positive relationships for parents and babies and peers.

Literacy: Linking sounds and words with signs. The handouts of baby signs are linked to weekly topics.

Mathematics: Developing and improving counting skills through the use of numbers in songs and rhymes.

Understanding of the World: Making sense of the physical world through props, pictures and signs of everyday objects.

Expressive Arts and design: Exploring a wide range of media and materials throughout the program. Encourages sharing of ideas and feelings through the use of signs.

Joanne Briley

Baby Signing Teacher and Trainer

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