

Baby 
Signing
TiME!®

Parent Guide

TALK, SIGN & READ

Whole Body Learning





two little hands
p r o d u c t i o n s



BrightWagon
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

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Parent Guide

An early learning resource for parents of children ages 0-5 years

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Get a jump start to signing with a Signing Time Class!

“It’s fun to get together with other parents who want to sign with their children too. You will not only learn the signs but every class also includes tips on what to expect, how to teach signing as part of your daily routines and playtime, and how to promote language development.”

- Arleigh Lockett, Signing Time Academy Instructor

Introduction

In this guide, you will learn about how able and ready your child is to learn before age three, and what you can do to be your child's first – and best – teacher. We will introduce you to Whole Body Learning – a creative and playful approach that taps into the power of multi-sensory learning to fuel your child's growing mind. We'll teach you how to use the Baby Signing Time system to give your child early learning experiences that will not only be fun, but will also help your child *communicate* and *connect* with others.

While there are many approaches to enhancing early development, research suggests that the best way to prepare your baby for life and learning is to spend an abundance of **quality time** with your child - bonding, communicating, reading books, and playfully exploring together.¹ Your Baby Signing Time materials are a springboard for shared experiences that you, your baby, and your entire family can enjoy together.

Your Baby Signing Time Materials

In this guide, you will learn how to use your Baby Signing Time materials to enhance your child's early learning. Be sure that you have these resources on hand as you read this guide:

- Baby Signing Time DVDs
- Baby Signing Time Books
- Baby Signing Time Music CDs
- Baby Signing Time Flash Cards



About Whole Body Learning

Your baby was born ready to learn. Between birth and 36 months, your child's brain is growing faster than at any other time.² This means that what you do right now really matters. To help you take advantage of this window of opportunity, this guide will introduce you to Whole Body Learning - a fun and effective approach to learning that will nurture your child's growing mind.

Whole Body Learning experiences:

- **tap into the power of the five senses** to help children make sense of the world and move from simply *gathering* sensory information to becoming active, creative, problem-solving *thinkers*. In other words, it challenges young children to develop their creative intelligence.
- **are one-on-one** to enhance bonding, communication, and learning. With one-on-one activities, you can follow your child's lead. For example, suppose you are reading a storybook, and your child points to a tree on the page and gets really excited. You can follow your child's lead by teaching your child the sign for tree, going outside to see the apple tree in your yard, and picking some apples to eat. You may not have finished reading that storybook, but you gave your child the opportunity to gain new knowledge – and a sense of empowerment about directing his own learning.
- **fit your child's natural way of learning.** Multi-sensory learning activities address the needs of all children – no matter what their learning style: visual, auditory, spatial, or kinesthetic.³
- **are effective because they are playful, fun, and engaging** - never forceful, overbearing, or rushed. It is more important to instill a life-long love of learning and build a strong relationship than it is to pressure your child to achieve.



Enhancing Early Learning

In this Guide, you'll use your Baby Signing Time materials to engage your baby in three fun and easy Whole Body Learning experiences:

TALK with your child using *Creative Talk*

SIGN with your child using *Baby Signing Time*

READ with your child using *Creative Book Sharing*



TALK: *Creative Talk*

Research tells us that one of the most effective things you can do to boost your child's language and cognitive development is simply to talk with your child.⁴ With Creative Talk, you converse with your child about everything you can – even before your little one can talk back to you. We'll teach you how to use Creative Talk to start conversations, introduce new vocabulary words, and encourage your child to creatively explore the world.

SIGN: *Baby Signing Time*

Baby Signing Time gives your child the ability to communicate before she can talk. Babies gain control over their hands long before they develop the ability to produce speech. With Baby Signing Time, you and your baby will use simple signs from American Sign Language to communicate. Signing babies can tell parents what they want or how they are feeling, so they are less likely to get frustrated or throw tantrums. Research shows that signing babies learn to talk sooner, have larger vocabularies, and make longer sentences than children who don't sign.⁵ We'll show you how to use Baby Signing Time to create an explosion of learning that can have a lasting impact on your child's language and thinking skills.

READ: *Creative Book Sharing*

Book Sharing is more than just reading to your child – it is exploring a book and making it a new and engaging experience every time you open it. We'll teach you how to use Book Sharing to create a strong bond with your child while stimulating imagination and encouraging early literacy skills.

TALK with your Child

Your Guide to *Creative Talk*

What is Creative Talk?

Creative Talk, sometimes called “connected conversation” or “language dancing,” is all of the happy, positive “extra talk” over and above the everyday business talk of raising your child. When you use Creative Talk, you converse with your child about everything you can, even before your baby can speak. You introduce new vocabulary words, ask a lot of questions and talk about the discoveries your child makes as she explores her world using the five senses. When you use creative talk, you are **immersing your child in spoken language** and opening the doors to a world of language and communication.

For example, if you want to teach your child about a banana, you could:

- show your child a banana (*see*)
- say the word banana (*hear*)
- make the sign for banana (*see*)
- let your child touch the banana (*touch*)
- let your child smell the banana (*smell*)
- let your child taste the banana (*taste*)

Use **Creative Talk** to explore your child’s reaction to the banana such as: Is it yummy? What color is the banana? Is it yellow or red? Do you want to eat some more banana? How does the banana peel feel? Where should we put the banana peel?

Benefits of Creative Talk

When you use Creative Talk with your child, you can:

- strengthen your relationship.
- accelerate language development.
- enhance cognitive development.⁶

One comprehensive study found that children from families that are extremely talkative have a significant advantage over children from homes with average or low levels of communication.⁷ Specifically, children who hear around 48 million words by age four (twice as much as what the average child hears), have a **distinct advantage in language development, social skills, and even IQ.**⁸ In short, one of the best ways to give your child a good foundation for learning is to use Creative Talk. This research says it really works!



How to use Creative Talk

Creative Talk is easy and fun, so you can use it every day – even before your baby is born!

BEFORE BIRTH

Babies can hear their parents' voices before they are born, so you can begin the process of bonding and get into the habit of talking to your child in the months leading up to your baby's arrival. It doesn't really matter *what* you say because, at this stage, your baby will be listening primarily to the pitch, tone, and cadence of your speech. So pay attention to *how* you talk – always use a comforting and positive tone. After the birth, you'll know that she was listening because she will recognize your voice!⁹

How to do it:

- Talk to your unborn child about anything you want to.
- Use a comforting, positive tone of voice.
- Invite your spouse and children to talk to the baby, too.

What to Say

We are so excited to meet you. We saw you sucking your thumb today when we had the sonogram. Oh! You are kicking up a storm in there. I am going to put my hand next to your foot. Do you feel that?



FROM BIRTH – AGE 2

During this stage, you can use Creative Talk to **help your child make sense of the world as he explores his environment using sight, touch, smell, sound, and taste.** You can use Creative Talk every day to draw your child's attention to the pictures, shapes, colors, textures, and objects around you. Help your child focus on important words by putting lots of expression in your voice and using animated facial expressions and body language. Use your baby's name often to let him know that he is an important participant in the conversation, even if he can't talk back to you yet. As your baby grows, he will be able to use signs to participate meaningfully in the conversation - even before he learns to talk! (See the next section for more information about signing with your baby.)

How to do it:

1. Use your child's name.
2. Show your child an object he is interested in (a toy, an apple, a pet).
3. Ask questions and talk about the object.
4. Invite your child to explore the object using the five senses whenever possible.
5. Emphasize key words with your voice, facial expressions, body language, and signs/gestures.
6. Support learning by offering either-or choices: "Is this ball red or blue?"



What to Say

<i>touch</i>	<i>Your blanket is soft, isn't it? It feels so good!</i>
<i>sight</i>	<i>What colors are on your blanket? This color is blue.</i>
<i>sight</i>	<i>Can you find another part that is blue? Yes, this is blue, too!</i>
<i>smell</i>	<i>Your blanket just came out of the dryer. Let's smell it. Mmm. It smells clean.</i>
<i>sound</i>	<i>What's that under your blanket? A rattle! Let's shake it. Can you hear it?</i>
<i>creativity</i>	<i>How can we make a house with this blanket? What else can we make?</i>

FROM AGES 2-5

During this stage, Creative Talk can help **add depth to your child's understanding of the world**. Use Creative Talk to present familiar items in new contexts, talk about ways that two items are the same or different, and identify and discuss emotions. You can also tap into your child's emerging creativity at this stage by helping her synthesize sensory information using play, imagination, and problem-solving.

How to do it:

1. Talk about objects, actions, or emotions that your child shows an interest in.
2. Ask either-or questions to help your child focus on certain characteristics.
3. Ask your child to participate in problem solving.
4. Encourage your child to relate the concept to his own experience.
5. Encourage your child to use his imagination.

What to Say

Your little sister is sad. Do you see what happens to her face when she is sad? Does she smile, or does she frown?

What can we do to help your little sister feel better? Giving her a hug is a great idea!

Tell me about a time when you felt sad. What helped you feel better?

If you had a magic wand that could make sad feelings go away, what would it look like?



Using Creative Talk to manage behavior

At this age, your child is naturally becoming more independent, which means you'll need to set boundaries at times. You can use Creative Talk to reinforce positive behaviors or to stop and redirect unwanted or dangerous behavior.

Praising Positive Behavior

Children tend to repeat behaviors that get them the most attention, regardless of whether that attention is positive or negative.¹⁰ In short, the behavior that gets the attention is the behavior that increases. What this means is that if you want your child to be well-behaved, you need **to give your child the most attention when she is well-behaved!**

Research suggests that a parent needs to provide SEVEN positive interactions for every ONE negative interaction; a ratio of 7:1.¹¹ Deliver your praise with frequency and sincerity. Use Creative Talk to build a positive environment at home.

What to Say

I see that you are helping to pick up the toys! You are being a good friend.

I like how you asked me for your snack with a "please." Nice manners!



Redirecting Unwanted Behavior

Sometimes parents have to stop unwanted or unsafe behavior – there’s no getting around it. While prohibitions are necessary, they should be used sparingly. If young children are constantly hearing prohibitions, like “no, no” or “get down” or “don’t do that!” they may get the message that the world is about limitations and never gain the confidence they need to explore, communicate, and thrive.¹²

One simple way to correct unwanted behavior is to **redirect your child to a positive behavior**. Use Creative Talk to divert attention away from the unwanted behavior to an alternative activity your child will enjoy rather than saying “NO, NO!” Remember, the behavior that gets the attention is the behavior that increases!

Jumping on the couch is unsafe. We can jump outside!

It’s Johnny’s turn to ride the bike. Would you like to go to the slide or to the swing?

Pulling the dog’s hair hurts. Let’s find something else we can do for her. Do you want to give her a chew toy or would you like to fill up her water dish instead?



SIGN with your Child

Your Guide to *Baby Signing Time*

What is Baby Signing Time?

Before they can talk, babies communicate through facial expressions, body language, and gestures. Baby Signing Time taps into babies' natural ability to communicate with their bodies by introducing you and your family to American Sign Language (ASL). Signing is a **powerful communication tool** for preverbal babies – and an amazing learning tool for toddlers and preschoolers.¹³



Benefits of Baby Signing Time

When you teach your baby to sign, the benefits are almost immediate.

Babies who sign:

- are less frustrated because they have a way to communicate.
- feel more confident and secure because their needs are being met.
- can get help immediately because they tell their parents when they are feeling sick or hurt.

Signing also benefits children who are already talking. When signs and words are used together, auditory learners *hear* the word, visual learners *see* the sign and kinesthetic learners can *use their hands* to make the sign.

Toddlers and preschool children who sign:

- develop larger vocabularies.¹⁴
- develop more positive attitudes toward books and reading.¹⁵
- can experience a long-term boost in IQ.¹⁶

In other words, signing creates the perfect storm that can trigger a surge in language learning and cognitive development.

How to sign with your child

Signing with your child is easy and fun – and just like Creative Talk, you can do it every day. In this section, we'll tell you when to start signing, how to do it, and how to use the Baby Signing Time system to give your child the full benefits of signing.

WHEN TO START

You can start from birth. The sooner you get into the habit of signing, the sooner your child can start learning and benefiting from signs. Babies can understand signs at a very early age, but won't be able to sign back to you until their hands are ready, somewhere between 6 and 12 months of age. Every baby's developmental timetable is unique. If your baby isn't signing by 12 months, don't worry. Some babies don't start signing back until 13 or 14 months – or even later! A later start to signing isn't usually an indicator of a language delay; however, if you have a concern, talk it over with your child's pediatrician.

3 BASIC STEPS TO SIGNING

1. **Make** eye contact with your child.
2. **Use** the sign and the word together.
3. **Repeat!** Look for natural opportunities to use the sign throughout the day.

HOW TO GET STARTED

- **Start** with a few signs like MILK, MORE, and ALL DONE. Once you get into the habit of using these signs, learn a few more signs, or combine signs to make short sentences such as “MORE MILK?”
- **Look** for understanding. Babies will recognize your signs before they can sign back to you. Babies may smile, kick their feet, or look in the direction of the object you are signing about to show you they understand.
- **Wait** for it! Babies 6 to 9 months of age may take two months or more to make their first sign. Older babies may sign back sooner, especially if they see the sign often.
- **Praise** any attempt your child makes – even if the sign isn't perfect. Her physical coordination will improve as she grows. For now, just show her how happy you are that she is communicating with you!

The more often a child sees a sign, the faster she will learn it.

How to use your Baby Signing Time materials

The Baby Signing Time system will give your child a signing experience filled with music, imagery, color and fun. Here are some ways you can use the materials as you play and practice with your child:

BABY SIGNING TIME DVDS

1. **Watch** the DVD *with* your child. Baby Signing Time DVDs are organized by songs, which makes it easy to watch a short segment if your child is very young.
2. **Sign** along with Rachel and the children.
3. **Talk** about the signs you just learned using Creative Talk. *“Rachel just made the sign for MORE. Look, I am signing MORE. Can you show me the sign for MORE?”*
4. **Practice** through play. *“See these blocks? When you sign MORE, I’ll put a block here. When I sign MORE, you put a block on top of mine. We’ll keep signing until our stack is really high!”*



BABY SIGNING TIME BOARD BOOKS

1. **Sit** close to your child.
2. **Read** the word on the page.
3. **Point** to the object or action the sign represents.
4. **Sign and say** the word – and encourage your child to do the same.
5. **Talk** about the word using Creative Talk. *“You signed MILK! Good job. Do you like MILK? Do you like MILK in a bottle or in a sippy cup?”*



Baby Signing Time on the go!

www.SigningTime.com/ondemand

Get digital Baby Signing Time products
for your computer and mobile devices

Sing out loud, sing out strong!

Many people feel insecure about their singing voice. Research shows that young children LOVE to hear their parents sing – regardless of their singing skills. So, don't worry if it's not good enough for anyone else to hear, just sing! You will be a star in your child's eyes.

BABY SIGNING TIME MUSIC CDS

Help your child choose a song.

1. **Sign, dance, and sing** together.
2. **Talk** about the songs using Creative Talk.
"We just sang about washing our hands. Do you like to wash with warm water or cold water? What color is the soap? Let's go practice washing up!"
3. **Use** the songs as a "soundtrack" to your daily activities. Sing and sign the songs as you go about your day. This helps your child connect what she's learned in the song to what's happening in real life.



Download song lyrics!

www.signingtime.com/resources/music-songs/lyrics

BABY SIGNING TIME FLASH CARDS

1. **Show** your child the front of the flash card. (word + illustration side)
2. **Sign** the word that's on the card.
3. **Talk** about the sign using Creative Talk.
4. **Practice** through play.
"I am going to put the flash cards for the signs you know face up on the table. When you make the sign, you can pick up the card that goes with that sign. Are you ready?"



Want help? TAKE A SIGNING TIME CLASS!

- Learn signs together in a playful setting
- Meet other signing families in your community
- Share your experience and ask questions
- Learn valuable signing tips
- Get help recognizing your child's first sign
- Stay motivated, especially if it's taking a while to see that first sign!

Kelly Konieczki, Signing Time Academy Instructor

See back cover for your local Instructor's information or visit www.signingtime.com/classes.

Baby Signing Time helps your child learn to talk – and get ready to read!

You already know that the Baby Signing Time program is designed to welcome your child to the world of communication through signing. Did you know that Baby Signing Time DVDs, books, CDs, and flash cards are designed to help your child get ready to *talk* and *read*, too?

Helping your child learn to talk

Children learn through repetition. The more they hear a word, the faster they will learn it and start to use it.¹⁷ The words that are highlighted in the Baby Signing Time DVDs are spoken aloud and repeated often. The meanings of the words are reinforced through real-life examples. Your child gets even more exposure to these words through the Baby Signing Time songs, books, and flash cards. When your child uses a sign to communicate, it means that he associates the sign with something in his world. This means that when he is physically ready to talk, he's likely to *say* the word because he already understands it. In fact, research shows that when signing children start to talk, they have larger vocabularies and put together longer sentences than other children.¹⁸

Helping your child get ready to read

Just as children learn to *say* a word after hearing it many times, they learn to *recognize* a word by seeing it repeatedly. The Baby Signing Time materials give your child repeated exposure to printed words. In the DVDs, your child will see the word on the screen as it is said aloud. These words appear again in your Baby Signing Time books, flash cards and word cards so you can provide even more exposure to these printed words and help your child get ready to read. *(Learn more about using Word Cards to enhance reading readiness in the next section.)*



As the graphic above shows, when you use a spoken word, the sign, and the printed word together, you are helping your child understand the meaning of that word in three different ways – and tapping into the power of multi-sensory learning. This enriched exposure to words helps build a solid foundation for learning to read.¹⁹

Read more about how the Baby Signing Time and Signing Time programs can enhance early learning in these free downloadable guides for parents and educators, available at www.signingtime.com/guides:

- [Enhancing Early Literacy Instruction Using Signing Time](#)
- [Using Signing Time in Early Childhood Settings: A Guide for Educators](#)
- [Sign Language in the Classroom Using Signing Time](#)



Can I use this program if my child has special needs?

Baby Signing Time and Signing Time are powerful tools for communicating and connecting with *any* child. However, these tools can have an even greater impact in the lives of children with special needs, including those with Down syndrome, autism, speech and language delays, and many other types of disabilities.

Read more about how Baby Signing Time and Signing Time can be used to help children with specific needs in these free downloadable guides for parents and educators at www.signingtime.com/guides:

- [Using Signing Time with Children who have Down Syndrome](#)
- [Using Signing Time with Individuals on the Autism Spectrum](#)
- [Using Signing Time with Children in Speech and Language Therapy](#)

"I love you."



Why are Rachel's fingers color-coded?

Rachel's fingers are color-coded to help your child distinguish the finger positions in the different hand shapes used in signs.

READ with your Child

Your Guide to *Creative Book Sharing*

What is Creative Book Sharing?

Reading aloud to your child is one of the most important things you can do to help your child's emerging language and literacy skills. Creative Book Sharing helps you maximize the benefits of reading aloud by involving your child in a meaningful way. With Creative Book Sharing, your child becomes an active participant in the reading experience, not just a passive listener.

Benefits of Creative Book Sharing

Creative Book Sharing helps make a book fresh, fun, and exciting every time you open it. It's like never reading the same book twice! With each reading, you can:

- direct your child's attention to different objects, shapes, and colors on the page.
- tap into your child's imagination using Creative Talk to make the characters and story come to life.
- feel closer to your child as you spend one-on-one time together.

How to use Creative Book Sharing

The following pages contain examples and strategies to add variety, imagination, and fun to reading aloud. Use these simple strategies when you share books with your child. Remember to use Creative Talk to personalize your child's reading experience.

Creative Book Sharing can work with any book

Let your child choose the book you read aloud whenever possible. This is a great opportunity to follow your child's lead in directing his own learning.



Creative Book Sharing Example: *Goodnight Moon*

Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon* is a classic bedtime story that young children love to hear over and over again. Check out a copy from your local library and use the Creative Book Sharing strategies suggested below while reading this story aloud:

first reading:

Read the story aloud so your child becomes familiar with the rhymes and patterns within the text. Stop and talk about any pictures your little one expresses an interest in.

second reading:

There's a little white mouse that appears on every spread. Read the words aloud, but before turning the page ask your child, "There's a little mouse on this page. Can you find it? Yes, there it is!" When you get to the end, help your child come up with a name for the mouse.

third reading:

Teach your child the signs for MOON and STARS. As you read the story, sign these words with your child as they appear in the text or illustrations.

fourth reading:

Read the story aloud, then act out the story by helping your child say goodnight to the things in her room before she goes to sleep.

fifth reading:

Let your child open the book and turn the pages. As you read, run your finger under the text.

sixth reading:

Invite your child's favorite stuffed animals or dolls to cuddle up and listen to the story.

seventh reading:

As you read, stop just before saying the last word on the page. Encourage your child to "fill in the blank" by saying the word aloud.



Creative Book Sharing Strategies

Creative Book Sharing strategies can help you teach important early literacy concepts to your child. For more about book sharing, see *Emergent Literacy and Language Development*, edited by Paula Rhyner, Ph.D.

Concept	Creative Book Sharing Strategies
Books are fun to explore!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Use melodic and expressive speech as you read. ◦ Focus on a different aspect of the book each time you read (e.g., find specific colors, shapes, or rhymes - see example on previous page). ◦ Watch your child’s reactions to see what interests him. ◦ Use Creative Talk to explore your child’s interests.
Books relate to real life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Engage your child’s five senses when reading, whenever possible. ◦ Choose books that relate to your child’s recent experiences. ◦ Use the book as a springboard for helping your child remember those experiences. <i>“See the pig? You saw a pig at the petting zoo last week. What sound did the pig make? Was the pig’s tail curly or straight? What do you remember about the pig at the zoo?”</i>
Reading is a social experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sit close to your child as you read. ◦ Talk about your own reactions to the story. ◦ Make book reading a positive experience.
Printed words have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meaning • shapes • sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Word Meanings: Emphasize the word with your voice. Use signs and the spoken word together to emphasize meaning. Use Creative Talk to deepen your child’s understanding of unfamiliar words. ◦ Word Shapes: Run your finger under the words as you read. ◦ Word Sounds: Teach your child to pay attention to the sounds that make up words by reading books with rhymes and alliterations. Dr. Seuss books are great for this!



Concept	Creative Book Sharing Strategies
Books work in a certain way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Show your child that books are held right-side up, and they have titles and authors. We turn pages from right to left, but we read sentences from left to right. We read from the top to the bottom of the page. ◦ Have some fun by holding a book upside down or starting a story from the back of the book and let your child show you the right way to do it!
Stories have parts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If you are reading a familiar story, ask your child to identify the setting, characters, or conflict of the story before you read. ◦ Ask your child to predict events as you read to help her identify common patterns in stories. ◦ Ask your child to look at the pictures in a familiar book and tell the story herself as she turns the pages. ◦ With older children, compare characters in stories. <i>“How is Little Red Riding Hood like Goldilocks?”</i> They are both girls, they both leave home to go somewhere, and they both encounter trouble along the way.
Make the story your own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Help your child engage his imagination. Personalize the story by making up a new ending or creating a sequel. ◦ Dress up as characters or use puppets to act out the story. ◦ Read different versions of the same story and talk about how the versions are different.

READ with your Child

Your Guide to *Word Cards*

What are Baby Signing Time Word Cards?

The Baby Signing Time Word Cards are a set of fifty printable cards you can download at www.babysigningtime.com/wordcards. These Word Cards are purposefully simple – each white card shows a single printed word.

How are they different from the Baby Signing Time Flash Cards?

Baby Signing Time Flash Cards show the printed words, photos, and illustrations. The Word Cards show just one printed word per card.

Where can I get my Word Cards?

You can find Baby Signing Time Word Cards at the end of this guide. You can print them at home.

You can also make your own cards using blank index cards and a broad-tipped marker. Create cards for words that your child hears often - like words for favorite toys, names of people in your family, or names of pets. Keep your word cards free of photos or drawings to help your child focus on the shape of the printed word.

What are Word Cards for?

Many parents who use the Baby Signing Time system report that their children can recognize written words from the Baby Signing Time materials in other contexts. Their children get a huge thrill out of “reading” those words!

This kind of “reading” happens when a child has had a lot of exposure to a word in different contexts - on a DVD, in a book, or on a flash card, for example. Even before a child understands the individual letters and sounds that make up a word, he may begin to recognize the printed word as a picture or a shape.

Using Word Cards is a fun way to familiarize your child with printed words in a new context, and help him get ready for reading.



Special Bonus Feature!

How do I use the Word Cards?

Choose a set of 5-10 cards that contain words that are highly interesting to your child – or a set of cards that match a particular book or DVD you are enjoying together. Follow these steps:

1. **Hold** up a Word Card.
2. **Run** your finger underneath the word.
3. **Encourage** your child to say and/or sign the word.
4. **Wait** for a few seconds to give your child a chance to think before she responds.
5. **Say** the word aloud as you run your finger under the word again.

Leave the cards out so your child can pick them up and explore them on his own. Add or replace cards as your child's interests change – or after she consistently recognizes the word.

If you have an infant or a toddler, you may want to laminate your Word Cards. For safety, round the corners with scissors or a corner cutter.

When can I start using the Word Cards?

You can start using the Word Cards with your child as early as six months of age.

Download your
Baby Signing Time Word Cards at
www.BabySigningTime.com/wordcards

How often should I use the Word Cards?

Show the Word Cards to your child regularly. Some parents show them to their child once a day, some parents show the cards 2-3 times per week. Do what works best for you. Make the practice short and fun, but stop if your child loses interest.

What else can I do to help my child get ready to read?

Many parents stop signing when their child starts talking. However, signing can continue to fuel your child's growing mind. Signing boosts a child's vocabulary and helps him learn and remember the letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Learn more in this free guide for parents and educators:

Enhancing Early Literacy with Signing Time
www.SigningTime.com/guides

The Signing Time Story

In December of 1996, Rachel Coleman and her husband, Aaron, welcomed their first daughter, Leah, into the world. At the time, Rachel was writing music and performing with her folk rock band. They would take young Leah to band practices and concerts and were amazed that she was able to sleep in spite of the loud music. When she was fourteen months old, they discovered why: Leah was profoundly deaf.

To say the least, their world turned upside down. Rachel's priorities instantly changed. She put down her guitar and picked up sign language. She and her husband immediately started teaching American Sign Language (ASL) to Leah as fast as they could learn it. Something remarkable happened: by the time Leah was 18 months old, her sign language vocabulary far surpassed the spoken vocabulary of "hearing" children her same age. While Leah's little friends could only point and whine for something they wanted, Leah could sign "Juice, not milk," or "Cheese and crackers, please."

Other parents took notice, including Rachel's sister, Emilie, who started teaching sign language to her infant son, Alex, so that he would be able to communicate with Leah. Emilie was thrilled one morning when baby Alex, then only ten months old, found his own use for sign language: he stopped fussing, looked up at her and signed "milk."

A few years later, Rachel and Aaron's second daughter, Lucy, was born. After dealing with Leah's deafness, they felt a second child would be easy. However, Lucy arrived eight weeks premature with spina bifida and cerebral palsy. Doctors worried that Lucy would never be able to speak, let alone use her rigid fingers to sign with her deaf sister.

Somewhere in the midst of all of this, Rachel and her sister Emilie teamed up to create a captivating, entertaining way to teach sign language to children who are not deaf. Their plan was to make a short DVD that gave their friends and family a fun and easy way to learn ASL signs so they could communicate with Leah. In May of 2002, the first volume of Signing Time was released, starring Rachel along with three-year-old Alex and four-year-old Leah.

The response was overwhelming. Word spread from mom to mom and family to family. Before long, the small community of people learning to sign with Leah grew into an expansive community of parents, educators, and health professionals using Signing Time to introduce the benefits of sign language to children everywhere. Testimonials poured in with touching stories about how Signing Time had been instrumental in dissolving communication barriers and giving a "voice" to children who previously had no way to express themselves. Everyone wanted more Signing Time. Rachel and Emilie's company, Two Little Hands Productions, was born.

After the release of Volume 1, the Coleman family experienced a miracle of their own. Lucy, then two years old, was not communicating at all. No words, no signs...nothing. One day while watching Signing Time, Lucy attempted a gesture that Rachel had never seen before, but looked like the sign for "more". Rachel said, "Lucy, do you want more?" Lucy's eyes opened wide, as if to convey, "Hey, mom, you got it right!" From that point forward, Lucy's sign language vocabulary slowly but steadily increased, despite her physical challenges and gloomy prognosis. Shortly thereafter, Lucy started talking.

By the time she reached age five, Lucy started attending a mainstream kindergarten class – something Rachel never imagined possible. Lucy continues in a mainstream classroom to this day and excels in her schoolwork.

Today, Two Little Hands Productions offers a full line of Baby Signing Time and Signing Time DVDs, CDs, books, flash cards, lesson plans and other materials. Parents, educators, pediatricians, homeschooling parents, speech therapists, public schools, child care centers, and libraries around the world use Signing Time to communicate and connect with children.

Public television stations across the United States and Nick Jr. air Signing Time episodes and music videos to give even more children access to the many educational and social benefits signing has to offer.

Thanks in large part to Signing Time, sign language is now gaining recognition as an all-encompassing tool for communication that anyone can use. Whether used by a pre-verbal infant, a non-verbal child with disabilities, or a family who simply wants to learn ASL as second language, signing is becoming an even more important part of American culture.

While Rachel's influence has been felt worldwide, she remains focused on a highly personal goal. "My hope is that everyone will know a little sign, just as most people know a little Spanish – so when your child sees a child like mine at the park, there would be no awkwardness, no communication barrier, just three signs...*Hi...friend...play...* that is all it would take to change her world."



Rachel Coleman with daughter, Leah and nephew, Alex.

Additional Reading

The following works were consulted in the development of this guide. We recommend them to parents and educators who are seeking to deepen their understanding of child development and educational strategies:

Bright From the Start:

The Simple, Science-Backed Way to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind from Birth to Age 3
by Jill Stamm, Ph.D.

Dancing with Words:

Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy
by Marilyn Daniels, Ph.D.

Disrupting Class:

How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns
by Curtis W. Johnson, Michael B. Horn, and Clayton M. Christensen

Einstein Never Used Flash Cards:

How Our Children Really Learn--and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less
by Robert Golinkoff Ph.D., Kathy Hirsh-Pasek Ph.D., Diane Eyer Ph.D.

Emergent Literacy and Language Development:

Promoting Learning in Early Childhood
Edited by Paula M Rhyner, Ph.D.

Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children

by Todd Risley, Ph.D. and Betty Hart, Ph.D.

Raise a Smarter Child by Kindergarten

Raise IQ by up to 30 points and turn on your child's smart genes
by David Perlmutter M.D. and Carol Colman

The Power of Positive Parenting:

A Wonderful Way to Raise Children
by Glenn I. Latham, Ph.D.

What's Going on In There?

How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life
by Elise Eliot, Ph.D.





Sign Guide

The following pages contain an illustrated guide to 100 ASL signs presented in the Baby Signing Time system. Signs are much easier to learn when you see them physically demonstrated. If you're just getting started, watch the Sign Review section of your Baby Signing Time DVDs. Once you've learned the signs, you can refer to this guide for a quick reminder of how to sign the words in this program.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------|------------|
| Again | Diaper | More | Snow |
| Airplane | Dirty | Music | Soap |
| All done/finished | Dog | New | Socks |
| Apple | Doll | Nice | Sorry |
| Baby | Down | Night | Stars |
| Ball | Drink | No | Stop |
| Balloon | Eat | Outside | Sun |
| Banana | Feel | Pajamas | Telephone |
| Bath | Finished/all done | Peach | Thank you |
| Bear | Fish | Pear | Time |
| Bike | Flower | Play | Train |
| Bird | Friend | Please | Tree |
| Blanket | Frog | Potty | Up |
| Boat | Game | Rain | Wait |
| Book | Go | Sad | Wash hands |
| Brush teeth | Good | Share | Water |
| Bubbles | Grandma | Shoes | Where |
| Bug | Grandpa | Signing | Wind |
| Bus | Grass | Sky | Yes |
| Car | Happy | Sleep | You |
| Carrot | Hat | | |
| Cat | Horse | | |
| Cereal | Hot | | |
| Clean | Hurt | | |
| Cloud | Juice | | |
| Coat | Laugh | | |
| Cold | Leaf | | |
| Cracker | Me | | |
| Cry | Milk | | |
| Dad | Mom | | |
| Day | Moon | | |

ASL Video Dictionary

Rachel Coleman, host of Baby Signing Time, demonstrates all of these signs at www.SigningTime.com/dictionary.

again



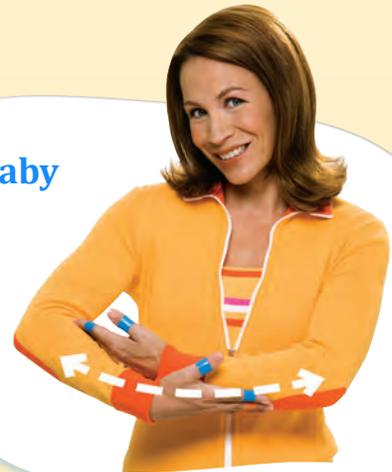
apple



airplane



baby



all done
(finished)



ball



balloon



bear



banana



bike



bath



bird



blanket



A

B

brush teeth



boat



bubbles



A

B

book



bug



A

B



A B



A B

cloud



cracker



coat



A



B

cry



cold



dad





A

B



drink



finished
(all done)



eat
(food)



fish



feel



flower





A

B



go



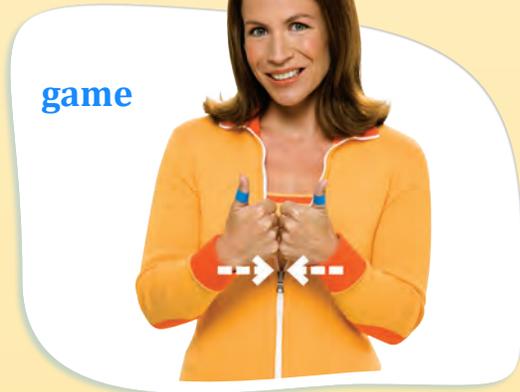
frog

A

B



good



game



grandma

grandpa



hat



grass



horse



happy



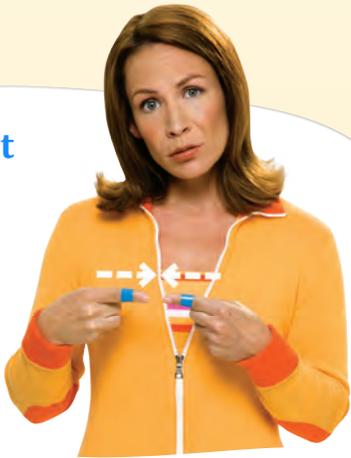
hot



A

B

hurt



leaf



juice



me



laugh



milk



mom



music



moon



A

B

new



more



nice



A

B

night



pajamas



A B

no



peach



A B

outside



A B

pear



A B

play



rain



please



sad



potty



share



shoes



sleep



A

B

signing



snow



sky



soap



socks



stop



sorry



sun



A

B

stars



telephone



thank
you



A

B

tree



time



up



train



wait



wash hands



wind



water



yes



where



you



ENDNOTES

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6. Todd R. Risley and Betty Hart, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children* (Paul H Brookes, 1995).
7. Ibid.
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9. Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek Ph.D., and Diane Eyer, *Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children Really Learn--and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less* (Rodale, 2004).
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15. Ibid.
16. Linda Acredolo and Susan Goodwyn, "The long-term impact of symbolic gesturing during infancy on IQ at age 8." Paper presented at the meetings of the International Society for Infant Studies, Brighton, UK. (2000).
17. Paula M. Rhyner Ph.D., editor, *Emergent Literacy and Language Development: Promoting Learning in Early Childhood* (The Guilford Press, 2009).
18. Susan W. Goodwyn, Linda P. Acredolo and Catherine A. Brown, "Impact of symbolic gesturing on early language development," *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 24 (2000): 81-103.
19. Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek Ph.D., and Diane Eyer, *Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children Really Learn--and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less* (Rodale, 2004).

Learn signs with Rachel!

Online ASL Video Dictionary

www.SigningTime.com/dictionary

Meet your Instructor

Your Certified Signing Time Academy Instructor is here to:

- help you enroll in a local Signing Time class
- recommend additional early learning products for your child
- show you how signing can help your child learn to read and spell
- celebrate with you as your child discovers the joy of signing