

# Signing with Baby



"I love you Mommy" photo courtesy of Misty Felner, *Sign for Baby*

## Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about baby sign language?

What benefits could there be to using sign language with a baby?

Definitions: Intentional – done on purpose

Acquisition – learning a new skill or way of doing something

## Reading

17 Isabella is 15 months old. She is not talking yet, but she knows how to communicate with  
35 her parents in many ways. Her mom and dad have taught her the sign language signs, or hand  
50 motions, for some common words. Isabella uses the sign for “more” most often, especially when  
68 eating. Her parents are much happier now that she can do the “more” sign rather than scream for  
more food or milk.

72 Teaching babies to use sign language is a fairly new idea, but in many ways it has been  
90 around forever. Babies have always found ways to communicate before they start to talk. For  
105 example, most babies can wave before they can say “bye-bye.” Also, babies will often point to  
121 something they want without using the word for the object.

131 According to signingbaby.com, “It is a fact that infants develop the fine muscles in their  
146 hands before they develop those required for speech, so they’re equipped to communicate with you  
161 before they can speak.”

165 With this new knowledge, there has been an increase in parents and caregivers being more  
180 intentional about teaching their babies to sign. There are many resources available that can help  
195 parents both learn sign language and teach it to their babies. Many hospitals and school districts  
211 offer baby sign language classes. Also, there are many books and websites on the topic.

226 Signing with babies is quite easy. The caregiver simply needs to **model** the sign along with  
242 speaking the word at the appropriate time. After repeating this many times, the baby will soon  
258 learn to do it. Some of the most common baby signs are: more, all done, help, please, thank you,  
277 drink, and eat.

280 Sign language makes communication between adults and babies easier. In addition, sign  
292 language contributes to the goal of language acquisition. When parents speak and sign a word,  
307 babies learn how to both sign and speak the word.

317 Source: [www.signingbaby.com](http://www.signingbaby.com)

## Understanding

1. What does the phrase “has been around forever” mean regarding baby sign language? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. How can parents and caregivers learn to teach babies to sign? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Why can babies learn to sign before they can speak? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What is the process for teaching a baby the sign for a certain word? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. What does the word **resource** mean in this reading? \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. Why is it helpful to teach babies sign language? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What does the word **model** mean in this reading? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Write about any experiences you have with babies and sign language.

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