

Introduction:

Many children who are late to talk or who struggle to say words clearly benefit from using sign language. Sign language allows the child to use his hands to communicate with those around him when his mouth won't do the trick. This can reduce frustration for children who have a lot to say but can't get it out.

Using sign language in children who are not yet speaking has been studied thoroughly and the research shows that using sign language will not prevent a child from speaking or slow him down in terms of spoken speech. In many cases, using sign language (or other forms of alternative communication) has actually been shown to help children start talking more quickly.

Instructions:

Teaching a child to use sign language can be a tricky thing to do if you don't already know sign language. I suggest that you learn 5-10 signs each week and make those signs with your hands whenever that word comes up in conversation. For example, if you say "Do you want a cookie?" and you know the sign for cookie, you would sign "cookie" when you say it but you wouldn't try to sign the other words in the sentence. Later, when you know the sign for "want", you could sign both of those words as you say the sentence.

Here are the signs for 60+ of the most common first words in children. These are great words to start with for learning sign language because they are the words that children typically say first anyway. Browse through and pick 5-10 to learn the first week and start using them around the child.

Common First Words in Sign Language



all done



again



away



all gone



little



big

Common First Words in Sign Language



clean



dirty



eat



down



go



get

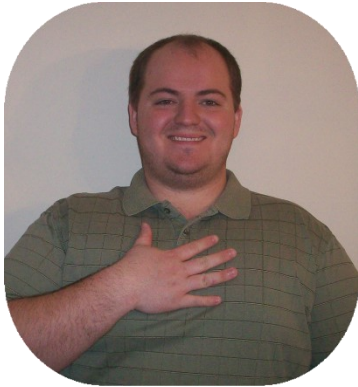
Common First Words in Sign Language



in



help



my



more



no



your

Common First Words in Sign Language



open



on



sit



put



throw



stop

Common First Words in Sign Language



there



this



wet



up



cat



dry

Common First Words in Sign Language



bird



dog



toilet



sink



shirt



bathtub

Common First Words in Sign Language



shoe



pants



cup



bowl



cracker



spoon

Common First Words in Sign Language



apple



cookie



table



bed



boy



chair

Common First Words in Sign Language



baby



girl



glue



slide



block



marker

Common First Words in Sign Language



bubbles



ball



airplane



car



bike