



# How to Teach Your Baby 6 First Signs in Baby Sign Language

With Printable Chart

How to Teach Your Baby 6 First Signs in Baby  
Sign Language  
With Printable Chart

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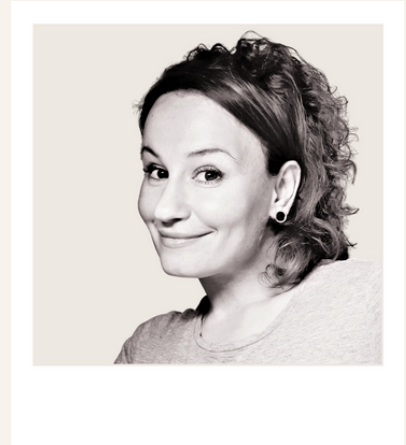
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Your First Signs

# About me

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Hi there!

I'm Ioanna, owner and teacher at Sign + Learn and I'm here to help you start signing with your little one/s. I started running baby signing classes in November 2019 and since then I have met many lovely families and seen babies learning their first signs with me.


The aim of this little guide is to answer the main questions you may have about baby signing and help you understand what signing can offer to you and your family.

If you need further support, please get in touch!

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How To Teach Your Baby 6 First Signs In Baby Sign Language



# Introduction

This short but compact e-book will help you to:

- understand what baby signing is
- know the benefits of baby signing and what baby signing can do for your family
- start out with baby signing, showing you the very first signs you can use with your baby
- understand the golden rules of baby signing

At the end of the guide, you will find a printable baby sign chart with the graphics of the signs you need to start signing with your baby.

“

**We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today.**

Stacia Tauscher



# 01

## What is Baby Signing

Baby signing is a tool that helps parents/caregivers and babies to communicate before speech. It is the term used for signing with babies using keyword signing from various systems. Babies learn to express themselves clearly and effectively using simple signs alongside words.

Signing to your baby as you go with your daily routine is a great way to help your baby understand the meaning behind the signs and the words. With daily exposure to the signs and the gross motor skills sufficiently developed to form simple signs, the adventure begins!

## IS baby signing a trend?

Baby signing is not something new!

There has been more than 30 years of research in baby signing. One of the leading researchers is Dr Joseph Garcia, who back in the 90's used signing with his daughter. The signs he used were based on the American Sign Language (ASL).

## what is the difference between BSL and Makaton?

British Sign Language (BSL) is a language in its own right, with its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

Makaton is a sign and symbol system used to support speech.



## Please note!

Baby Signing doesn't happen overnight! It takes time and effort, but the results are amazing and with life-lasting effects.



## Did you know?

1

British Sign Language (BSL) it's the fourth most used language in the UK.

2

Sign languages are national and even have regional variations.

3

Sign language is not only about signs; facial expression is equally important and it can even change the meaning!

# 02 Why Sign to my baby?

That's a good question! With so many activities around why bother learning baby signing?

Well, baby signing is not just another activity to do with your baby. It's a skill for life! Children not only sign as babies and toddlers, but they keep signing in their childhood and well beyond. Using British Sign Language signs means that your signs are recognisable outside your family or the classes you may attend. (Please note that British Sign Language is a language in its own right, with its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary. When you use signs with your baby, you use what we call Sign Supported English- signs in English order).

Babies and toddlers usually sign to make their needs and wants known, but they also sign what is important to them in terms of their interests, toys, etc.

Preschoolers usually use a sign alongside speech when they want to emphasise a point, or when they want to be more assertive. Also, signing is an excellent way to communicate in public places without being loud or to communicate information that little ones may find embarrassing, like a reminder to use the toilet.

At school, fingerspelling particularly helps a lot with spelling.

As an activity, baby signing is fun, engaging and with long-lasting effects. It is important that it doesn't require any special equipment. You just need your hands to unlock this magic door into your baby's thoughts. How cool is that?

“

When my daughter was a baby, she could sign what was wrong with her when she was upset or what animal she spotted when she was pointing somewhere. Even now, although she is talking all day long, it is still a great life skill. My five-year-old will sign through the window at her swimming class to tell me how she is doing. My two-year-old will complain about her meal even though her mouth is full.

Baby Signing Mum, Alexandra

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## The benefits of Baby Signing

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I had a lovely moment with H. a couple of weeks ago. She was getting quite upset and was trying to tell me she wanted something, but the more she tried and I didn't understand, the more upset she became until I realised I should just start going through all the relevant signs- worked a treat! She was happy again and I was so pleased and proud- it felt great and was a brilliant example of how useful it is as a parenting tool.

Baby Signing Mum, Anna

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## Baby Signing can decrease the stress levels for both parents and babies.

Introducing a few signs can significantly improve the communication between parents and babies. The baby doesn't always have to resort to cry to make his needs known.



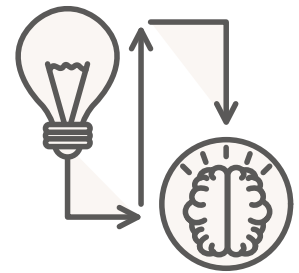
## Baby signing reduces frustration and tantrums.

If you think better, what is a tantrum? A tantrum is simply the result of an unfulfilled need. Using just a handful of signs you can reduce tantrums by 90%. Amazing, isn't it?



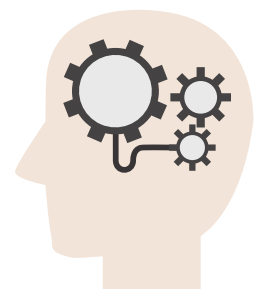
## Signing enhances language development.

When signs are used in conjunction with speech, babies can make the connection between the sign and the word and they acquire a larger spoken vocabulary, as well as the ability to form longer sentences.



## Signing aids memory.

Children can remember words easier, because there is muscle memory involved. It is true that the more senses involved in learning, the greater memory retention the child will have.



## Signing helps with early literacy skills.

Literacy skills, just like language skills, start from birth and are learnt best through everyday interactions with your baby. Signing along to stories helps little ones grasp the content and structure of a story easier. Children can sign sentences by linking signs together, which gives them a head start in spoken language, too!



## Signing can increase children's IQ.

Studies show that signing can increase children's ability to learn and their IQ by 12 points. However, please don't make this your main aim, otherwise signing will lose its fun factor!





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## How to do it



Begin with just a couple of signs.

Depending on your baby's age, you can use more or less signs, but it's always a good idea to take it slowly especially in the beginning, as babies become easily overwhelmed.

Use age-appropriate signs

Use signs that are relevant to your lifestyle. For example, if your baby hasn't started solids yet, the sign for "milk" is the only sign you need to cover his need for food.

Always grasp your baby's attention before signing.

Calling your baby's name is a good way of getting her attention. Always get eye contact before you sign.

Sign where your baby can see you.

Sign where your baby can see you; this is close to your face.

Sign and say the word at the same time.

I can't stress enough how important this is, but to put it simply, if you only show your baby the sign, this is what she will learn (the sign and not the word). When you say the word as you sign, you help your baby make the connection between the word and the sign.

Use facial expressions.

Don't be shy to be as dramatic as you can! Babies read our face first, and facial expressions are extremely important when we teach them abstract concepts, for example, the emotions signs.

Repeat!  
Repeat!  
Repeat!

Babies learn through repetition. The more times you repeat a word and sign to your baby, the quicker your baby will understand it.



Keep it fun!

Baby signing is not a competition about which baby signed earlier or used more signs. Every single baby is different, grows and develops on his own pace. Never rush learning! Your baby will do things when he/she is ready. And always keep in mind that if your baby is teething or is about to hit a specific milestone, baby signing is not a priority and she will get back to it when she is ready.

So, don't be discouraged if your baby doesn't sign back!

Make signing part of your daily life, be consistent and you will see the results you are longing for!

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### When Should I start signing with my baby?

There is no "right age" to start signing. You can start signing with your baby as early as you want to. However, you have to manage your expectations and keep in mind that you may have to wait to see results until your baby is 8 to 10 months old. I recommend introducing signs to your baby after the fourth month when they begin to focus.

Toddlers who already speak some words can still benefit hugely from baby signing, as toddler speech is usually unclear and some words are difficult for them to use.



**Will signing prevent my baby from talking?**

Not at all!

Signing (when it's done correctly), helps the development of language and literacy skills and enhances communication.

Dr. Joseph Garcia, one of the world's foremost experts on communicating with infants, and on baby signing specifically, says:

**"Baby signing accelerates your baby's language development so that when speech begins, the content is more sophisticated."**

**We use more than one languages at home.**

**Is signing beneficial for us?**

Absolutely! For families that use more than one languages at home, baby signing serves as a bridge between the spoken languages.

Because signing is visual, it helps your baby to see the connection between the two different pronounced words.



## When can I expect my baby to start signing?

Although you can start signing to your baby as early as you want, you can't expect her to sign back until she has sufficiently developed her gross motor skills. This usually happens around the sixth month of life.

Starting earlier, won't certainly harm your baby, but you may be discouraged if your baby doesn't sign back you.





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## Epilogue

The parents who have been to my classes have been impressed by how signing has changed their relationship with their children. It's not only that they managed to reduce frustration and have a better quality of family life, but they also acquired a better insight into their children's world.

Imagine being able to understand what your baby thinks or wants to talk about. How would that change your life? The window of opportunity is short- the results, though, are amazing, life-changing and long-lasting.

“

If you don't see it or haven't been told about it, you don't believe it.

I didn't believe it would be like this. Whoever sees my baby sign is so impressed!

I don't know how people who don't sign communicate with their little ones at this age!

Baby Signing Mum, Athina



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Sign. Learn. Grow.

## Your First Signs



milk



eat



drink



cuddle



bed



home

**Don't forget!**

Always grasp your baby's attention before signing.  
Sign and say the word at the same time.  
Have fun!

**LET'S SIGN**

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