



All About ASL

Resources:



[What we know](#)



[Free ASL lessons](#)



[How to learn ASL](#)

- American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, natural, visual language that has the same linguistic properties as spoken languages and it has its own grammar and differs from English.
- ASL is expressed using movements of the hands, body and face. It is the primary language of many North Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing, and is used by many hearing people as well.
- ASL can help children as young as babies communicate before they can talk. It can help reduce tantrums, teach the ABCs and spelling, communicate feelings, and improve vocabulary while teaching another language.
- You can learn ASL through apps, books, websites, tutors, classes, videos, deaf groups/clubs, and more.
- Research has shown that a child can learn ASL and another language at the same time. It is suggested that the parent would sign the word and then say the word.
- It is never too early or too late to start teaching ASL to your child. Remember that repetition is key.
- Stay patient and persistent. Don't get discouraged if your child uses signs incorrectly or doesn't start using them right away. The goal is improved communication and reduced frustration — not perfection.
- Common words taught in ASL in the beginning are: milk, water, more, all done, play, sleep, mom, dad, eat, yes, no, help, bath, book, sorry, please, thank you, I love you and drink.
- Keep signs simple. It does not need to be perfect. Start with signs to describe routine requests, activities and objects in your child's life.
- Many babies will have up to 5 signs by a year old and up to 30 signs by 18 months.
- Make signing interactive. Try holding your baby on your lap, with his or her back to your stomach. Embrace your baby's arms and hands to make signs. Use signs while communicating with your baby. Try signing while bathing, diapering, feeding or reading to your baby.
- Research suggests that basic form sign language (signs for individual, frequently used words that are easy for babies to form) might give a typically developing child a way to communicate several months earlier than those who only use vocal communication.