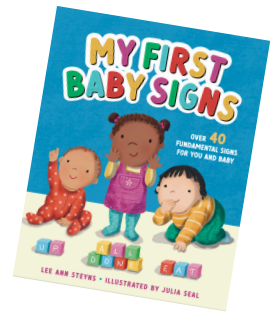


Baby Sign Language Course on Kinedu with Lee Ann Steyns



I'M LEE ANN!



- Mom of 2
- Author of *My First Baby Signs* book
- Creator and Instructor at Signing Babies
- Former preschool teacher
- Former director of children's programs

Today we covered:

1. What is Baby Sign Language?
2. Benefits of using Baby Sign Language
3. How babies learn to sign
4. Frequently Asked Questions

What is

Baby

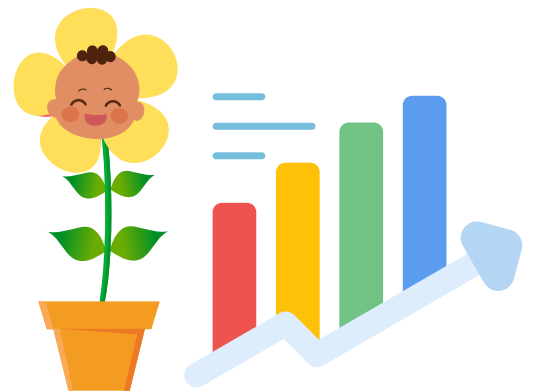
SIGN LANGUAGE



Baby Sign Language is a broad term that describes teaching babies and toddlers specific gestures or signs alongside verbal language to increase early communication.

In my classes we learn American Sign Language signs, which is the official language for Deaf communities in North America and is widely used across the world for babies and kids.

BENEFITS OF SIGNING



FOR BABIES:

- Allows babies to express their needs without crying
- Allows fine motor skill development as they practice signs

- Increases bonding with adult caregivers because their needs will be responded to
- Supports verbal speech acquisition
- Can bridge the gap for late talkers to still express themselves
- Can increase IQ and vocabulary levels
- Creates more confidence and calm

FOR ADULT CAREGIVERS:

- Reduces the need to guess what baby wants
- Allows more accurate responses to baby's needs
- Increases bonding with baby
- Creates more confidence and calm



HOW BABIES LEARN TO SIGN

4 Stages of Learning

1. Reception

Your baby is taking in everything you are showing them.

They will watch you and take in what you show them, and it's never too early nor too late to start showing signs.

(And even if they're not looking directly at you, don't let them fool you into thinking they're not paying attention; babies and toddlers see E-V-E-R-Y-T-H-I-N-G,).

***Example:** after each diaper change your baby hears you say UP and sees you pointing upwards to sign UP as you pick them up.*

2. Response

Your baby is understanding the signs you are showing them.

They will begin to put together the context you show them as you present signs persistently alongside your daily activities.

***Example:** your baby will visibly react each time you sign MILK before a feeding (perhaps by smiling, reaching, or wiggling*

3. Mimicking

Your baby is doing their version of what signs you are doing.

This will most likely look clumsy, like a young St. Bernard puppy working out how to use its oversized paws. Their “babbling” hands

and signs will eventually develop more and more finesse as they gain more dexterity and move to the next stage.

Example: You sign ALL DONE by holding your hands up and twisting them a few times at the end of each meal, and your baby starts to hold one or both of their hands up.

4. Signing

Your baby is signing to express themselves.

They will begin to **SIGN BACK** when they have developmentally reached the stage of being able to move their hands independently.

Their signs will slowly start taking shape and look more intentional.

Example: Your baby signs MILK to ask for a bottle.

Frequently Asked



Questions

When should we start signing?

Babies can learn language at any age, stage or ability.

There is no perfect age or window of time to start showing signs. The key to knowing when to start teaching signs to your baby is determining if YOU feel ready.

→ *Signing takes some effort so it's best to start signing when you feel able to consistently present signs several times a day, most days.*

We can start showing signs to our little ones whenever we feel ready, just like we start talking right away to our new babies (even though they can't speak).

Will baby be confused if we speak more than one verbal language to them?

The short answer is no.

There's no reason to worry that your baby may get confused if you, or other adults who love your baby, speak different languages to them.

Babies are incredible learners and will absolutely soak up everything!

The key to making things as easy as possible for everyone is **consistency**. Aim to keep the exposure to verbal languages a regular occurrence in your day together. Essentially, your little one won't be confused by whatever natural ways of speaking are presented to them regularly.

So don't worry about confusing them, just talk!

And adding sign language into your conversations will create an even richer experience for your baby to learn verbal speech. Essentially you are adding a visual along with the verbal cues as you speak, act and create context with language.

For example, if you've chosen MILK, both of you will say and sign MILK in your spoken language every time MILK happens (nursing or bottle).

When consistently presented together, your baby will begin to associate MILK when they see the sign and hear the word. This solidifies things for baby no matter which language is being spoken and allows them to learn more easily.

How do we start signing together in different languages?

One or both parents can show signs along with your verbal speech. Just choose signs together that you'll **both** use daily to keep things straightforward for everyone. Overall, the visual signs will become an anchor to all the languages baby hears!

Will signing delay baby's verbal speech?

By always teaching signs while saying the words out loud, babies get to learn them both orally and visually, which augments the

natural process of acquiring speech. Research also indicates that babies who have learned sign language have larger oral vocabularies once in kindergarten, not the other way around.

When will baby sign back?

Generally, babies are developmentally ready to sign back from around 8-14 months old, depending on what age signing was established and how frequently they are seeing signs.

But earlier than that, babies can recognize your signs and respond back to you. Yahoo! Older babies closer to the age of 1-2 years and older can learn signs within days or weeks.

See you for our next class:

How to start signing with your baby

Thursday, June 12 @ 12:30pm CST



**Got a
question?**

Ask me anything at hello@signingbabies.ca

-Lee Ann





Prepared by: Lee Ann Steyns

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