

5 "Keep It Simple" Rules for Successful Signing

Sign to Speak's Five "Keep It Simple" Rules for Successful Signing

We believe that there are five basic “keep it simple” rules that will help anyone wishing to use sign language with babies to be successful. Following these rules you will find that signing is not complicated, will fit easily into your everyday life and give your child the gift of early language.

Keep It Simple Rule #1. Begin with **simple and meaningful words** that will open the communication door for your baby and allow them to express their wants and needs. Our book explains the three main words are eat, more and all done. Additional signs like milk or bottle and hurt, if we or they hurt themselves, are also very useful.

Keep It Simple Rule #2. Now that you have your first ASL signs, the cornerstone to the whole process is to **be consistent**. Every time you say more, eat or all done, you also sign those words. You can start at almost any time! We began around 2 months old and one of my daughters signed back by 9 months. People begin to falter because they don't see signing back but if you're consistent, sometime between 8 and 14 months, children will begin to sign back.

Keep It Simple Rule #3. When signing, because it is a visual language, **have your child's attention**. One of the best ways to do this is to sign at meaningful times in their lives, meal time, bath time, story time or song time.

Keep It Simple Rule #4. **Sign the correct ASL sign** for the word and not any variation that your child may do. Children often sing variations that you will understand but if you keep signing correctly, eventually they will produce the correct sign.

Keep It Simple Rule #5. Begin to **add more signs** as you become more comfortable and especially as your baby begins to sign back. Choose signs that you not only want your child to learn but also signs that are of interest to them (bird, dog, mom, dad, I love you, etc.)

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These were the simple steps my wife and I followed, the same ones my daughters are now following, and the same steps thousands of other signing parents are following and are the same ones that offer you and your child success. If you wish to become more involved in simple signing for babies, then watch the We Sign Babies and Toddlers 2 DVD or read [Sign to Speak - Babies Can Talk](#). There you will learn more about these five rules as well as lots of practical advice and signing words for you and your baby to grow on.

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