

Exploring

infants and toddlers

Capital District Child Care Council

a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 2

Signing With Babies

When we teach babies to sign, they can see, feel and hear language. Initially, signing gives us a way to communicate with infants before they develop verbal skills. Later on, signing helps children to follow verbal directions, express emotions and read social cues. Signing creates a common language for children and caretakers to use so that early trustful relationships are formed.

- ✎ Sign during daily routines (diapering, feeding, meals)
- ✎ Sign close to your eyes in baby's sight line
- ✎ Match facial expression and voice intonations with sign
- ✎ Speak when you sign and point to the object while you make the sign
- ✎ Start early and simply with words you use often (more, all done, eat, milk)



- ✎ Babies may start signing back as early as nine months!
- ✎ Share signs with caregivers and family to make baby's world consistent
- ✎ Sign favorite objects (ball, dog, blanket) and when reading
- ✎ Use hand over hand modeling while teaching signs when baby seems receptive and ready to play
- ✎ Sign on baby's body to reinforce signs (make whiskers on her face when reading a cat story)
- ✎ Later on, combine signs (food and all gone)
- ✎ Make a felt board and replicate baby's favorite items or story characters to extend her learning

**Be Patient!
Keep signing
while waiting
for babies to sign
back. Repetition
is the key.**



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