



# Baby Sign Language Academy



## Key Points To Remember When Teaching Your Baby Sign Language

- Though it is never too early or too late to begin signing, the general rule of thumb is to start introducing signs when your baby is approximately six months old. Your baby's memory retention is not well developed until then and you are less likely to become discouraged and give up if you do not have to wait too long for your baby to begin signing back.
- Is your baby receptive and ready to begin signing? The common indicators are that your baby should be able to sit independently, maintain eye contact or hold a gaze for more than a couple of seconds, and be able to point, wave bye-bye and mimic other similar hand gestures.
- Repetition and consistency are vital to your baby's ability to recognize that signs have meaning. Babies generally produce their first signs somewhere between the ages of eight and twelve months, with the average being ten months old. Your baby is much more likely to begin signing sooner than later if you sign with her on a regular basis.
- Your baby may watch your hand movements more intently once he makes the connection that these gestures have meaning. While he may still not be able to physically produce signs, you can tell he understands if he reacts excitedly or looks about when you sign to him.
- Your baby will likely start playing with her hands in an attempt to imitate the signs you are doing. Though intentional, these first attempts are usually more experimental movements than actual signs.
- While baby is still figuring things out you can expect your baby's signing to occur intermittently at first. You may find that he signs one day and not the next for a short period of time. He might sign out of context and use one sign to communicate many different words and ideas.
- Be on the watch for your baby's sign approximations. Your baby will make signs in a way that is easiest for her and may not produce them properly in the beginning. She may mirror your signs - making hers in reverse (like bird), and use the same gesture for words that are signed similarly like bear and hug.
- Most importantly - No Pressure! Relax, be patient, and have fun signing with your baby. Do not fret if you think your baby is not getting it and don't make him feel you are disappointed if he does not sign. Remember that signing with your baby should in no way be a chore for either of you.

