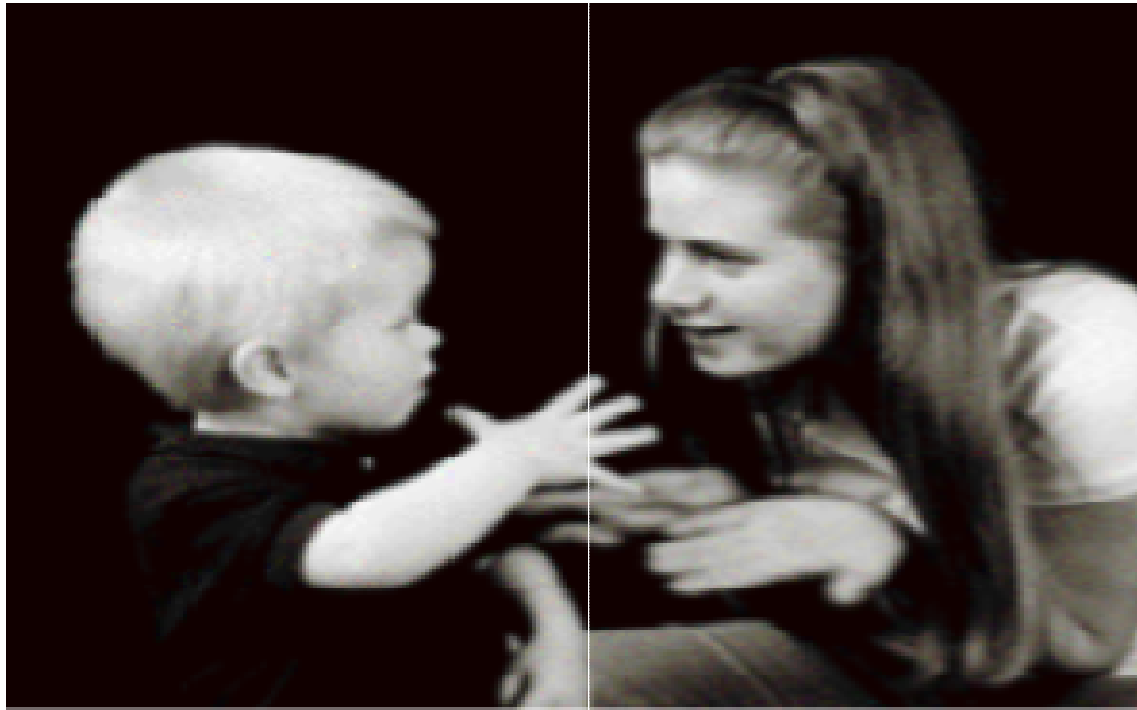


Bilingualism Through ASL



Presenters: Tara Holcomb, Erica Hossler, and Tami Hossler

Luke's Story





What is Bilingualism?

Bilingualism is the knowledge and regular use of two or more languages.
(Grosjean, 2008)

Bilingualism for a Deaf child means:

- Primary language access and exposure to the sign language used by the Deaf Community, in the U.S. it is American Sign Language.
- English is respected equally and learned as a second language in order to acquire it in its written and/or possibly spoken modalities.

All Deaf children have a human right to acquire language naturally and fluently at developmental milestones on par with hearing children.

Language Can't Wait....

Bilingualism Can Fully Meet A Deaf Child's Needs

Access To A Natural Primary Language Through ASL:

- Opens up interactive communication early.
- Develops his/her cognitive abilities.
- Allows access to acquire knowledge of the world.
- Opens communication with the surrounding world.
- Allows for acculturation into the world of the Deaf and hearing.
- Provides a foundation on which to learn written English and build speech if a child has that capability.
- Reduces frustration, builds self-esteem and confidence.



Research

- Deaf children have the same capacity to reach developmental milestones in language on par with hearing children.
- These milestones occur at similar ages for children exposed from birth to fluent language models.
- **Babbling** (Masataka, 2000; Meier & Willerman, 1995; Petitto & Marentette 1991)
- **First words/signs** (Bonvillian et al., 1983)
- **First referential usage of words/signs** (Folven & Bonvillian, 1993)
- **Two word/sign combinations**
(Newport & Meier, 1990)



Studies Show

Love



Early sign language acquisition sets a firm foundation for subsequent **cognitive, social-emotional, and linguistic development.**

- Studies indicate social and emotional advantages for deaf children raised in sign language environments, including measures of Executive Function and Theory of Mind

(ie the awareness of how mental states such as memories, beliefs, desires, and intention govern the behaviors of self and others)

Baron-Cohen, 2000; Dye et al in press; Hauser, Lukomski and Isquith, 2007; Schick et al 2007)

Literacy

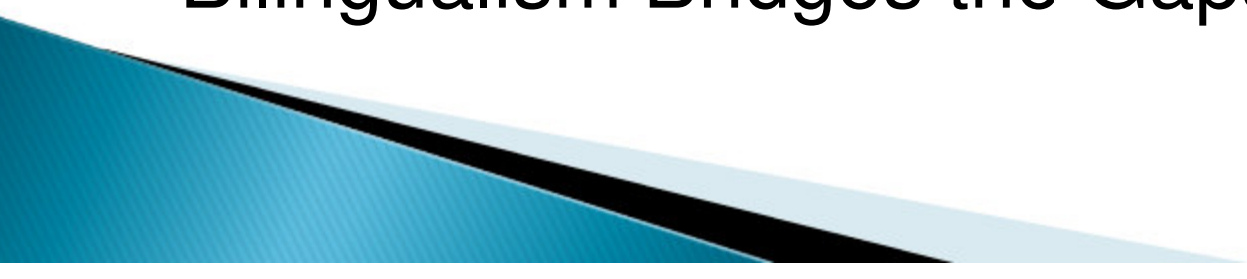


- There is a high correlation between ASL comprehension and English reading achievement in school aged deaf children who have been exposed to sign language from birth. (Mayberry, 1989; Strong & Printz, 1997; Hoffmeister, 2000; Padden & Ramsey 2000; Kuntze 2004)
- Preliminary data suggests that those children with implants who also sign have higher reading achievement scores than peers with implants who use only spoken language. (Marschark, 2007)

According to the California Department of Education, only 8% of all deaf and hard of hearing students in the state of California pass California High School Exit Exam while 40% of students at the California School for the Deaf pass HSEE. Furthermore, students who attended the Early Childhood Education have 90% to 100% chance of passing HSEE.

(California Department of Education)

Signing and Speech Develop

- There is **NO** evidence that signing removes a child's motivation to speak or interferes with learning to speak. (Marschark, 2007)
 - While cochlear implants and hearing aids have increased some deaf children's ability to hear, they are **not a replacement for language**. They are tools that may or may not increase the input of functional sound and this varies from person to person. The motivation of one child to another may vary when it comes to acquiring speech.
 - Sign Language learned after speech will not affect how often a child uses their voices. (Marschark, 2007)
 - Bilingualism Bridges the Gaps...
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Tips For Reaching Developmental Milestones From a Deaf Mom

- Notice what child/baby is focused on.
- Wait for his/her focus to shift from object to you.
- Respond to his/her eye contact with smiling and signing about the object of interest.
- Sign in child's visual field.
- Move objects of interest between you and your child in conversational space.




Tips...

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- Exaggerated size of signs
- Repeats signs
- Prolonged eye contact
- Points
- Pauses between periods of signing.
- Tap appropriately on shoulder or leg.
- Sign on child's body to model placement and form of signs

Visual Environments

- Adjust lighting
 - Position a mirror in the baby's room so they can see you entering and leaving the room.
 - Place color pictures of objects and ASL signs in the babies room.
 - Use technology such as flashing lights which indicate when the telephone is ringing or the someone is at the door.
 - Use the captioning on the television.
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Hearing Parents Can Learn ASL While Providing Language To Their Deaf Child

Birth to Twelve Months:

1. Take advantage of ASL classes and Online ASL resources to learn ASL.
2. Ask for a Deaf Mentor to come to your home for Early Intervention. Enroll the help of ASL role models.
3. Give your baby and your family members name signs.
4. Look at your baby when feeding, bathing, changing, etc.
5. Sign within his visual space.
6. Use facial expressions.
7. Play with handshapes
8. Share picture books
9. Encourage expressive signing by repeating your babies' sign babble.
10. Point to people and things and
their names and expand upon

sign
them.

MORE.....

- Seek information from Outreach Departments at the Schools for the Deaf and Clerc Center in Washington, DC.
- Locate bilingual preschools (ASL and English)
- Locate Deaf Storytelling Events
- Find playgroups with other families with deaf children.
- Continue to Learn ASL by taking classes and socializing with the Deaf Community.

No longer are parents separated from the resources to provide their Deaf child with language from the start...



Leslie's Story



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ASL Resources

American Sign Language Online – Northern U.S. & Canada <http://www.babies-and-sign-language.com/browsers-free-sign-language-asl-bsl-auslan.html>

ASL Pro

<http://www.aslpro.com/>

American Sign Language Browser

<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm>

Life Print Sign Language

<http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/signs.htm>

<http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/>

Master's Tech Sign Language Dictionary

[http://www.masterstech-](http://www.masterstech-home.com/The_Library/ASL_Dictionary_Project/)

[home.com/The_Library/ASL_Dictionary_Project/ASL_Tables/A.html](http://www.masterstech-home.com/The_Library/ASL_Dictionary_Project/ASL_Tables/A.html)

Baby Signs, Inc.

<https://www.babysigns.com/index.cfm?id=63>



More ASL Resources

Learning Sign Language: Visual and Audio, Videotapes and Computer Programs

<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/545.html>

How to Sign Colors and Numbers:

http://deafness.about.com/cs/culturefeatures3/a/metrodc_2.htm

Dawn Sign Press has an inexpensive coloring book series with ASL vocabulary, fingerspelling, and reading/writing practice.

<http://dawnsignpress.com/shopping/Detail.cfm?ProductID=4>

Free, printable ASL alphabet coloring pages

<http://www.dltk-teach.com/alphabuddies/asl/>

