

Introduction

The Auslan Family Signs book and online videos are specially designed for parents, siblings, grandparents, relatives and close friends of a deaf child, to provide them with an easy and enjoyable way to learn Auslan so that they can enjoy conversing with their child.

Many deaf adults shared how isolated they felt among their own families while growing up, just simply because they could not hear every day conversations around them. This isolation can easily be avoided, if family members include Auslan, Australian Sign Language, the language of the Deaf community in Australia, in their every day conversations. Your child will thank you for it in their later years. It is never too early or too late for your family to start learning Auslan.

Auslan helps in Language Development for Babies and Children

For babies who can hear, their first real word often appear at around 12 months, the first words are usually "hi", "bye-bye", "ma-ma", "da-da", and "milk". However, before they are 12 months old, babies often become frustrated at their inability to express their needs such as being hungry, cold or thirsty. As a result they cry and give tantrums and parents and caregivers are at times exhausted trying to figure out what is wrong.

Research has shown that some babies, who are exposed to sign language regularly and consistently at 6 to 7 months of age, usually begin to use signs effectively by their eighth or ninth month. Frustrations and tantrums are not as frequent as they are able to express basic concepts such as "thirsty", "milk", "water", "sleepy", "more", "hot", "cold", "play", "bath", and "teddy bear".

For this reason, for babies and children who are deaf, Auslan is paramount for their language development and self esteem. Sign language helps them to keep on par in language development with their hearing contemporaries, and will also help make learning English much more easily later on. Not only will this, but the feelings of isolation while growing up, not need to be experienced.

Sources:

Educating Deaf Children Bilingually - Mahshie, Shawn Neal, Gallaudet University Pre-College Publications, 1995

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