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Supporting Preschool Learning with American Sign Language

Viewer's Guide

This viewer's guide provides you information about American Sign Language and how you can integrate ASL to support preschool learning. Helpful resources can be found in the Resources section of this guide.

American Sign Language

Learn about American Sign Language

- ASL is a visual, gestural language. It is a complete language with unique grammar and linguistic features.
 - ASL is highly descriptive and uses space, handshapes, facial expressions, body positioning, and movement to communicate.
 - Many people use ASL, including people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, a child of deaf adults, people who are hearing, and people with disabilities.
- Children who are learning ASL are considered dual language learners in Head Start.



National Center on

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Preschool Learning

ASL and Preschool Learning



Benefits of ASL for Preschool-Aged Children

- Multisensory learning supports vocabulary recall
- ASL increases engagement with peers and educators
- ASL acts as a communication bridge for children who are dual language learners
- Provides insight into new a culture and language
- **ASL fluency supports speech and English language development.** Learning ASL has been shown to support the development of speech skills, English language development, and early literacy skills, regardless of hearing ability.

ASL and Your Learning Environment

What ASL signs would be the most important for you, children, and families to learn (center-based, family child care, home visits, group socializations)?

In what activity or routine would you first integrate ASL?

What ASL resources would you like to add into your learning environment (e.g., books, posters, labels with signs, etc.)?

Continued Learning for Educators

Incorporate Deaf-Friendly Practices

- Wave your hand or tapping their shoulder to get their attention.
- Flash overhead lights to signal transitions.
- Remove visual obstructions.
- Use soft lighting options.

Learn more: [National Deaf Children's Society](#)

Learn ASL from Deaf People

- Connect with your local Deaf Services Center for classes and events.
- Find Deaf creators and teachers on the web.

Learn more: "ASL Learning" section in the Resources below.

Invite Deaf Volunteers

- Check with your local Deaf Services Center for possible volunteers to join your learning environment.
- Invite family members who use ASL to teach in your learning environment.



Resource Spotlight: Ready DLL Mobile App



ASL is coming soon to the DLL App! Twenty-three signs and sentences!

Ready DLL is a mobile application (app) for teachers, caregivers, and staff who support young children who are dual language learners (DLLs). Access resources, learn key words and phrases, and discover implementation strategies from your smartphone.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/ready-dll-mobile-app>

Helpful Resources

Online Resources (ECLKC)

IDEA 101: Partnering with Service Providers to Support Effective Inclusion

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/idea-101-partnering-service-providers-support-effective-inclusion>

Promoting Early Hearing Screening and the Use of Assistive Technology

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/head-start-center-inclusion>

Follow-up Checklist: When a Child is Identified with a Permanent Hearing Loss

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/follow-checklist-when-child-identified-permanent-hearing-loss>

How Teachers and Parents Can Accommodate for a Child's Temporary or Permanent Hearing Loss

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/how-teachers-parents-can-accommodate-childs-temporary-or-permanent-hearing-loss>

Head Start Center for Inclusion

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/head-start-center-inclusion>

Responsive Teaching and Learning Environments for Dual Language Learners

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/responsive-teaching-learning-environments-dual-language-learners>

Planned Language Approach

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/head-start-center-inclusion>

Specific Strategies to Support Dual Language Learners When Adults Do Not Speak Their Language

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/head-start-center-inclusion>

Dual Language Learner Celebration Week 2024: Multicultural Principles and ASL

https://fb.watch/qDi8UAg_Xk/

Online Communities

MyPeers: Head Start Disabilities-Inclusion Network

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-social-network-early-childhood-professionals>

ASL Learning

Find your local Deaf resource center, community colleges, or community classes for ASL resources and classes.

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center (Register for free to access resources to ASL bilingual resources)

<https://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/ndec/professionals/>

Hands Land (Learn ASL rhythm and rhymes to support language learning)

<https://sites.google.com/handsland.com/handsland/home>

American Society for Deaf Children (Free ASL storytelling videos for children)

<https://deafchildren.org/knowledge-center/asl-resources/sign-language-stories/>

HandSpeak (ASL Dictionary and Deaf culture resources)

<https://www.handspeak.com/word/>

Christina Pax (Follow a family's journey learning ASL)

https://www.tiktok.com/@christina_pax?lang=en

That Deaf Family (Follow a Deaf family's journey on TikTok)

<https://www.tiktok.com/@thatdeafamily/video/7078172625490431275?lang=en>

Learn ASL with Debbie

<https://www.instagram.com/learnaslwithdebbie/>

Jason Gervase (Deaf ASL Teacher)

<https://www.tiktok.com/@jasegervase?lang=en>

Rocky Mountain Deaf School (ASL Storytelling)

<https://www.youtube.com/@RMDSCO>

American Society for Deaf Children (Sign Language Use for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing Babies: The Evidence Supports It)

<https://carcsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Sign-Language-Research-Brief.pdf>

Earworm Podcast: Family-to-Family Support as a key resource when empowering families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing to become informed decision makers

<http://www.earwormpodcast.org/>