



## SIGNING TIME SUCCESS GUIDE

Welcome to the magical world of Signing Time! This Success Guide provides you with steps you can follow to get the most out of Signing Time and begin this exciting process of discovery for you and your child.

This guide contains the following sections:

[Signing with Infants \(6-12 months\)](#)  
[Signing with Toddlers \(12-24 months\)](#)  
[Signing with Older Children \(2-102 years\)](#)  
[Signing with Children with Special Needs](#)

Find the section best suited for your needs. Most importantly, have fun!

### **Signing with Infants (6-12 months)**

Start signing when your baby is 6 to 8 months and holds your gaze for a few seconds. If your baby is 9-12 months, start signing right away.

1. Start with 3-5 Signs

The most common signs to start with are “milk,” “more,” and “eat.” Watch *Signing Time: My First Signs* to see Rachel demonstrate the signs. Then, use these signs every time you speak those words to your baby.

2. Use the signs frequently and consistently

When you nurse or give your baby a bottle, say “Do you want some milk?” and sign “milk.” Then, dialog about the milk and make the sign as your baby eats: “We’re having *milk*. *Milk* is so good!” Repetition is the key to success in signing with babies.



### 3. Talk to Your Baby

Signing doesn't mean being silent. When you want to communicate, look at your child and make eye contact. Make the sign directly in your baby's line of sight so your baby can see your eyes, the sign, and your mouth. Then, speak with your baby, emphasizing the word you are signing. For example, you might say, "Do you want some **more** bananas?"

### 4. Be Patient

If your baby is between 6-9 months, it may take 2 months or more for your baby to make the first sign. If your baby is older, you could see results sooner. Just remember that babies recognize the signs long before they can make them. Your baby may show her anticipation when you sign "milk" by grunting or panting. Look for these signs, and keep signing!

### 5. Watch Signing Time Together

Signing Time includes engaging music, animations, and shows lots of children signing. This teaches your baby that other children sign too, and facilitates quick learning.

Interact with your baby while watching Signing Time. Make the signs along with the video so your baby can see you signing too. Though Signing Time is geared for children, you will both learn signs as you watch. Incorporate these signs in to your daily life.

### 6. Look for Signs

Most first signs don't look exactly right since babies adapt signs to their physical abilities. As fine motor skills develop, signs will also develop (very similar to the pattern in speech development). That is one of the fun things about Signing Time—you can see children of all different abilities making signs.

Encourage any attempts your baby makes to communicate with praise and positive reinforcement. If you think it is a sign, say: "Oh, you're signing *milk*. Do you want some *milk*?" Continue to make the signs correctly and your baby will learn to make the sign correctly.



## 7. Add Signs

As your baby learns signs and begins to sign back, start adding other signs like "shoes" and "bath." Build your signing vocabulary by continuing to use the signs you already know as you add new ones.

As your baby begins to sign one sign at a time, start signing two-sign combinations like "more ball." This is a combination that Leah signs in *Signing Time Volume 1: My First Signs*.

Remember, this is about communication, not perfect signing. Make it fun! Enjoy the deep sense of connection you feel when you begin to have two-way conversations with your baby.

### **Signing with Toddlers (13-24 months)**

Signing with toddlers is fun and rewarding because toddlers have a passion to communicate. Toddler's first attempts at speaking are not always clear. Signing can empower their ability to express their wants and needs in a way that is easy to understand.

#### 1. Watch Signing Time Together to Learn Together

As soon as you receive your Signing Time videos, start watching them. Rachel demonstrates every sign so you can learn how to sign correctly. In addition, Signing Time includes engaging music, animation, and shows lots of children signing. This teaches your toddler that other children sign too, and facilitates quick learning.

Interact with your toddler while watching Signing Time. Make the signs along with the video so your toddler can see you signing too. Sing and dance as you sign with the songs for a fun movement activity.

#### 2. Use the signs frequently and consistently

Use the signs you know as frequently and consistently as possible. Mealtime makes a great time to sign. When your toddler wants more food, say "Do you want some *more* \_\_\_\_\_?" and sign "more." This is the key to signing success: frequency and consistency.



### 3. Talk to Your Child

Signing doesn't mean being silent. When you want to communicate, look at your toddler and make eye contact. Make the sign directly in your toddler's line of sight so your toddler can see your eyes, the sign, and your mouth. Then, speak with your toddler, emphasizing the word you are signing. For example, you might say, "Do you want some **more** crackers?"

### 4. Sing and Sign

The Signing Time Music CDs have amazing original songs from the videos that both you and your toddler can enjoy. Listen to the CD and see how many signs you can remember. Then, think of some of your other favorite songs and sign the words you know. Visit the Activities Area at [www.signingtime.com](http://www.signingtime.com) for downloadable lyrics and other fun ideas using the Signing Time songs.

### 5. Read and Sign

Reading is one of the best things you can do for your toddler's development. Signing while you read adds a fun interactive dimension to reading and can increase your toddler's interest in books, especially if they are visual or spatial learners. Often, signing toddlers will look to you for the sign for something you read in a book. If you don't know it, don't worry. Just make note of the signs you need to learn next, and reference the Signing Time videos or an ASL dictionary. Next time you read together, incorporate the new signs you've learned.

### 6. Look for a Sign

Most first signs don't look exactly right since children adapt signs to their physical abilities. As fine motor skills develop, signs will also develop (very similar to the pattern in speech development). That is one of the fun things about Signing Time—you can see children of all different abilities making signs.

Encourage any attempts your child makes to communicate with praise and positive reinforcement. If you think it is a sign, say: "Oh, you're signing *milk*. Do you want some *milk*?" Continue to make the signs correctly and your child will learn to make the signs correctly.



## 7. Keep Watching Signing Time

Since repetition is the key to signing success, watching Signing Time once daily is a good idea. You can either master the signs one show at a time or use all the videos interchangeably. Either way works fine. It's up to you.

Remember that signing is not something you have to stop your life to do with your toddler. Incorporate signing in to your daily activities. As you talk with your toddler, sign the words you know. Don't worry that you don't know how to sign everything.

When eating, make sure to use the food signs you know. Songs like the *Silly Pizza Song* and *Five A Day* also add a fun element to the eating experience. When you know your toddler will want more of something, wait for your toddler to sign "more." When you play together, sign the toys you are playing with. Use the signs you know consistently and repeatedly. The more you sign, the easier it will be for your toddler to learn to sign.

### **Signing with Children Who Have Special Needs**

If your child has physical, mental or developmental delays, signing can facilitate communication, reduce frustration and promote confidence in their own abilities. Signing can empower them to express their wants and needs, and can help to develop speech.

#### 1. Watch Signing Time Together

As soon as you receive your videos, sit down and watch Signing Time. Signing Time uses engaging music, animation, and shows lots of children signing. Interact with your child while watching Signing Time. Make the signs along with the video so your child can see you signing too.

#### 2. Watch for Signs

Most signs don't look exactly right since "exceptional" children adapt signs to their physical abilities. That is one of the fun things about Signing Time—you can see children of all abilities making signs. Signing is a great way to encourage fine motor and speech skills.



Encourage any attempts your child makes to communicate with praise and positive reinforcement. If you think it is a sign, say: "Oh, you're signing *milk*. Do you want some *milk*?" Continue to make your signs correctly and your child will understand. Likewise, you will come to recognize signs they adapt to their ability. Communication is the goal, not perfect signing.

### 3. Use the signs frequently and consistently

Learn a signs correlating to words you use daily, or watch for signs that your child seems interested in while watching Signing Time. Use these signs every time you say the word.

### 4. Talk to Your Child

Signing doesn't mean being silent. When you want to communicate, look at your child and make eye contact. Make the sign directly in your child's line of sight so they can see your eyes, the sign, and your mouth. Then, speak with your child, emphasizing the words you are signing. For example, you might say, "Do you **want** some **more bananas**?"

### 5. Be Patient

It could take a while before you see your child reciprocating signs. Don't give up! They will come in their own time. Watch for other physical responses or movements that show they understand what you are signing. Rachel Coleman's daughter Lucy, who has cerebral palsy, had no signs and no words for two long years. After continued exposure to speech and ASL, she had a total language explosion. Now at age four, her speech and sign vocabulary is far beyond what anyone predicted, and too extensive to measure. Your child is a miracle in the making, and some miracles just take time!



## **Signing with Older Children (ages 3 to...103)**

The first three volumes of Signing Time are geared for children ages 0-5, but all ages can benefit from learning basic ASL signs in this fun and entertaining way. Volumes 4-6 are a good challenge for any age, particularly if you try learning to sign all the songs.

Older children who are already speaking can use Signing Time to learn ASL as a second (or third) language just as you would French or Spanish. ASL is also a great way to communicate over long distances or during times when talking or shouting would be disruptive.

### **1. Watch Signing Time**

As soon as you receive your Signing Time videos, start watching them together. Rachel demonstrates every sign so you can learn how to sign correctly. Older children will generally reciprocate signs after their first viewing of Signing Time. You may be surprised by how many signs you remember!

### **2. Seek or create opportunities to practice your signs**

Once you have learned a few signs by watching Signing Time, use them as frequently and consistently as possible. Signing doesn't always mean being silent – practice the signs you know as you are speaking. Incorporate signing in to your daily activities. Sign the words you know. Don't worry that you don't know how to sign everything. Practice your finger spelling.

American Sign Language is used by millions of Deaf Americans, and learning some basic signs can empower you to interact with someone who is Deaf. Don't be shy! A Deaf person will usually be very appreciative of any attempt you make to communicate in their language.

### **3. Sing and Sign**

The Signing Time Music CD has so many songs that everyone can enjoy. Play the CD and see how many signs you can remember. Try your hands at the Silly Pizza Song and see if you can keep up with Rachel! Visit the Member's Area of our website to print out lyrics and learn other fun ways you can use the songs from Signing Time.



4. Watch Signing Time *closely*

Once you have mastered the signs taught by Rachel on Signing Time, see what other signs you can pick up from the series. There are hundreds of signs shown, though they may not be explicitly taught. See if you can learn some or all of the signs the songs that Rachel performs, such as the Signing Time Theme, Show Me A Sign (Vol. 1), The Good (Vol. 2), or any of the songs in Volumes 4-6. This is a challenge that may take you some time! Visit the Activities Area at [www.signingtime.com](http://www.signingtime.com) for more ideas and fun ways to use Signing Time.

5. Keep Signing!

There are many community resources available for people to learn ASL. Many Jr. High and High Schools offer ASL as part of their language curriculum. Colleges and Universities may offer ASL classes and tutoring through their continuing education department. Volunteer at a school for the Deaf or a Deaf Community Center. There are so many opportunities out there - with a little effort you'll find occasions to practice and learn more!

Come visit us at [www.signingtime.com](http://www.signingtime.com) !