Signing with Baby

Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about baby sign language?
What benefits could there be to using sign language with a baby?

Definitions: Intentional – done on purpose
Acquisition – learning a new skill or way of doing something

Reading

Isabella is 15 months old. She is not talking yet, but she knows how to communicate with her parents in many ways. Her mom and dad have taught her the sign language signs, or hand motions, for some common words. Isabella uses the sign for “more” most often, especially when eating. Her parents are much happier now that she can do the “more” sign rather than scream for more food or milk.

Teaching babies to use sign language is a fairly new idea, but in many ways it has been around forever. Babies have always found ways to communicate before they start to talk. For example, most babies can wave before they can say “bye-bye.” Also, babies will often point to something they want without using the word for the object.

According to signingbaby.com, “It is a fact that infants develop the fine muscles in their hands before they develop those required for speech, so they’re equipped to communicate with you before they can speak.”

With this new knowledge, there has been an increase in parents and caregivers being more intentional about teaching their babies to sign. There are many resources available that can help parents both learn sign language and teach it to their babies. Many hospitals and school districts offer baby sign language classes. Also, there are many books and websites on the topic.

Signing with babies is quite easy. The caregiver simply needs to model the sign along with speaking the word at the appropriate time. After repeating this many times, the baby will soon learn to do it. Some of the most common baby signs are: more, all done, help, please, thank you, drink, and eat.

Sign language makes communication between adults and babies easier. In addition, sign language contributes to the goal of language acquisition. When parents speak and sign a word, babies learn how to both sign and speak the word.

Source: www.signingbaby.com
Understanding

1. What does the phrase “has been around forever” mean regarding baby sign language? 
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2. How can parents and caregivers learn to teach babies to sign? 
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3. Why can babies learn to sign before they can speak? 
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4. What is the process for teaching a baby the sign for a certain word? 
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5. What does the word resource mean in this reading? 
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6. Why is it helpful to teach babies sign language? 
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7. What does the word model mean in this reading? 
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Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.
Option B: Write about any experiences you have with babies and sign language.
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