



# SIMPLE SIGN LANGUAGE INFORMATION SHEET

This document is also located on our website [www.inclusioncollaborative.org](http://www.inclusioncollaborative.org)



Infants and toddlers use gestures, "signs that are universal and easily identified by all," to communicate needs and wants (Brown & Clements, 2005, p.14). They wave goodbye, raise their arms to be held, and pull on someone's pants to get their attention -- all before any words are spoken. Once the toddler realizes that it's faster to use words, then gestures begin to fade away. Without gestures infants and toddlers can get very frustrated until adults figure out their needs. Similarly children with disabilities or special needs can also get frustrated when they do not understand verbal directions or have limited or no speech to get their needs met. This frustration can lead to behavior challenges.

Gestures and sign language are the bridge that help children comprehend verbal directions and communicate their needs even though they might have limited or no spoken language. Like the toddlers above, children with special needs will fade away the use of sign language once words are developed. But, doesn't the use of sign language seriously delay spoken language? No, this is a myth and has not been proven (Brown & Clements, 2005). Sign language will reinforce speech when it is accompanied by the spoken word it represents. For example, an adult should say "more" while simultaneously signing it. Consequently, the child sees and hears the word. Once the child starts using spoken words, then the adult can fade out the use of sign language.

Reference: Brown, C. & Clements, J. (2005). *Sign language for babies and toddlers*. San Diego: Thunder Bay Press.

## Purpose:

- Help a child comprehend vocabulary & directions
- Provide an alternative method to communicate needs and wants
- Act as a bridge until words are developed

## Benefits: enables a child to...

- Improve social interaction with others by signing needs and wants
- Reduce the frustration and stress of not being able to communicate
- Understand what is being said
- Communicate and get needs met

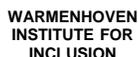
## Can support children who have...

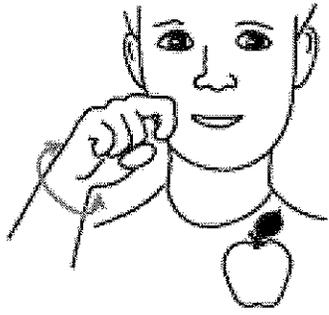
- Speech and Language Delays
- Difficulty Processing Verbal Input
- Autism & Asperger Syndrome
- English As a Second Language
- Hearing Impairments
- Cognitive Delays
- Challenging Behaviors

## Directions for Successful Implementation:

- Become familiar with the simple signs on language sheets
- Model the sign and say the word while using objects -- this helps the child to connect the sign to the object
- Model the sign and say the word during social interactions
- Allow children time to observe the new signs
- When children use gestures model back the correct sign and say the word
- Encourage children to make the signs with their hands
- Always praise children's attempts at signing
- Gradually fade out the signs when children develop words

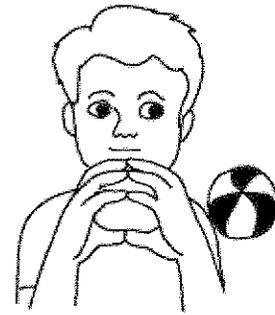
Supported by:





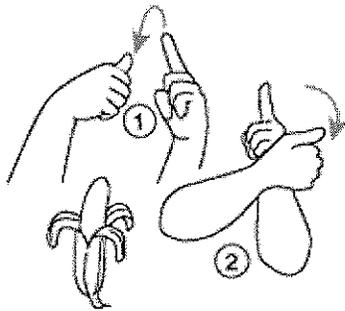
APPLE

X twists against corner of mouth.



BALL

Claw hands form ball shape.



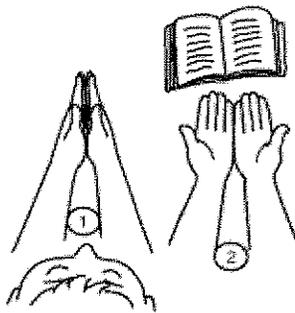
BANANA

Right A-hand peels left index finger twice.



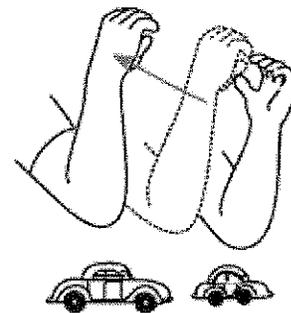
BED

Rest cheek on back of palms-together hands.



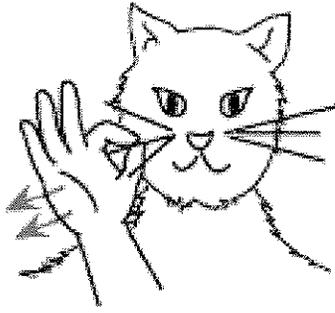
BOOK

Palm-to-palm hands open to palms-up.



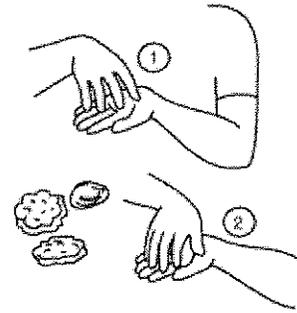
CAR

Right C-hand behind left C; right moves backwards.



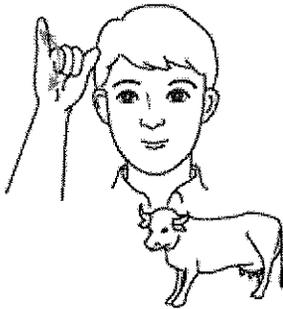
CAT

9-hand draws out whiskers; repeat.



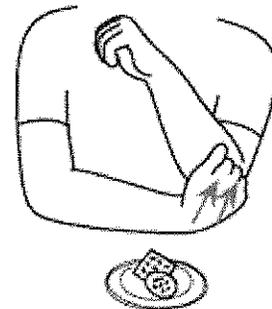
COOKIE

Right fingertips touch left palm, twist and touch again. (cookie cutter). (see BISCUIT)



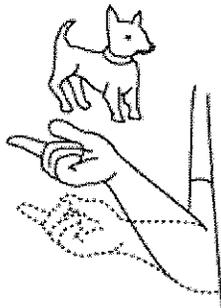
COW

Thumb of Y on side of forehead, twist slightly down. (see CATTLE)



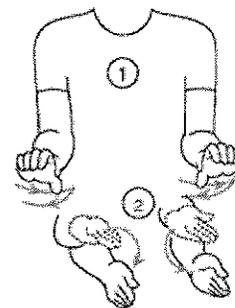
CRACKER

Palm-in A taps arm near elbow.



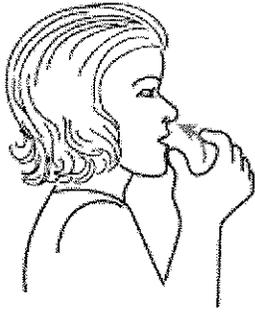
DOG

Palm-up fingers of D-hand snap several times. (to call a dog). (see PUPPY)



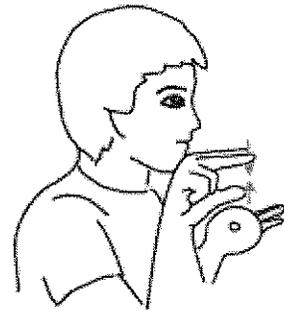
DONE

Palm-down C-hands move left to right, flat palms-up twist to palms-facing. (do + p.p.)



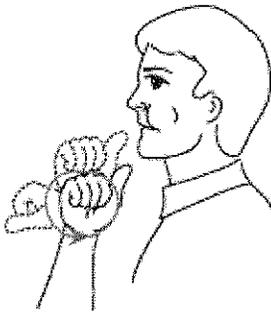
DRINK

Thumb of C-hand on chin, drink from C. (see SIP)



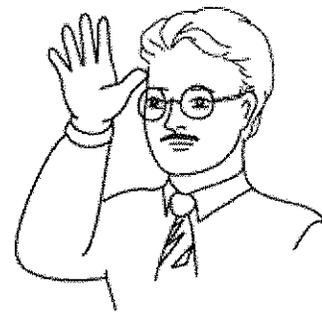
DUCK

At chin, index and middle fingers close on thumb twice. (see BIRD)



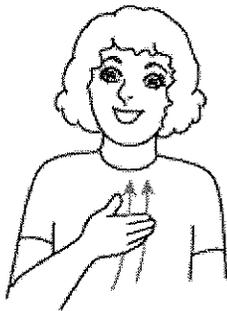
EAT

Thumb of extended-A circles in and up near mouth spooning food in.



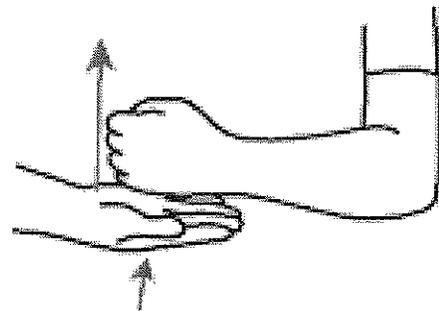
FATHER

Thumb of right 5 on forehead. (see DAD)



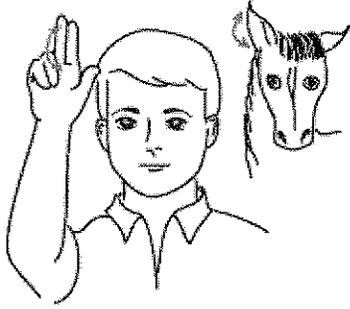
HAPPY

Open hand brushes middle of chest upward; repeat.



HELP

Palm lifts bottom of left S and pushes it slightly up.



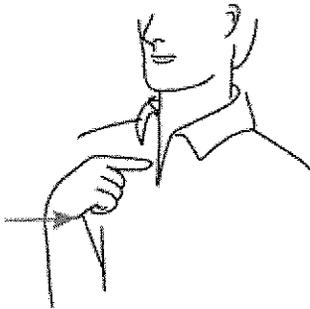
HORSE

Thumb on temple, flap H-fingers.



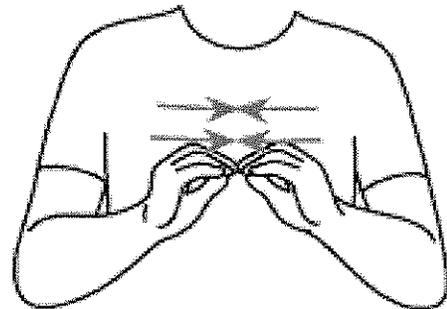
MAD

Palm-in 5-hand in front of face contracts to claw hand.



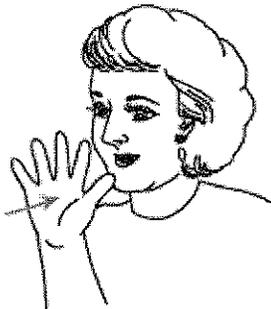
ME

Index points to and touches chest.



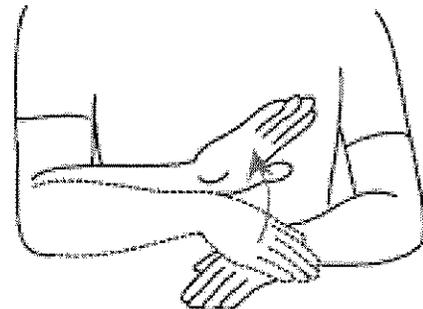
MORE

Flat-O's bounce tips together twice. (see EXTRA)



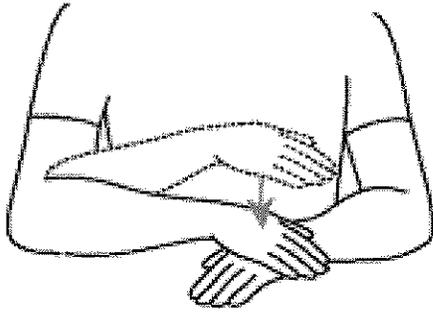
MOTHER

Thumb of palm-left 5-hand taps jaw near chin. (see MOM)



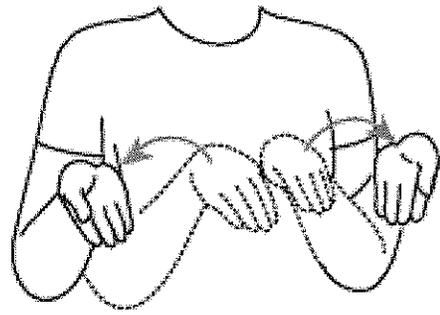
OFF

Right palm on back of left hand; lift off.



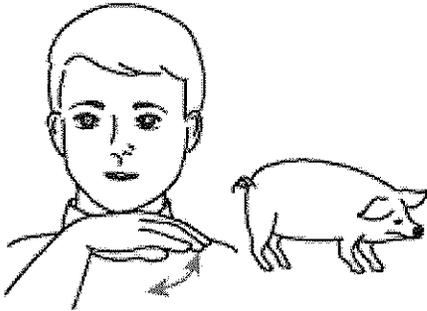
ON

Right palm touches back of left hand. (see MOUNT)



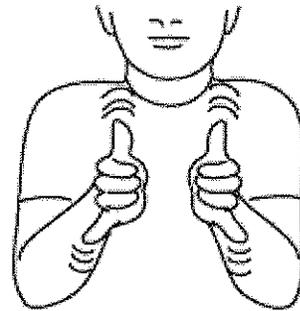
OPEN

B-hands, palms-down and sides touching, twist apart, palms facing up.



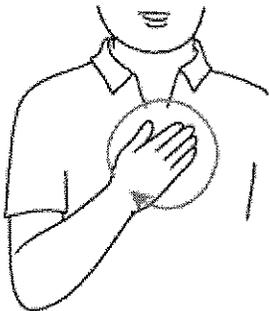
PIG

Palm-down flat hand flaps under chin. (see HOG)



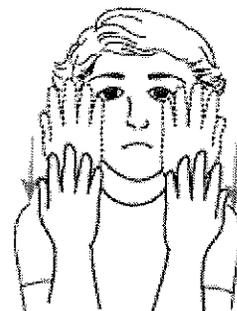
PLAY

Y-hands face each other; shake.



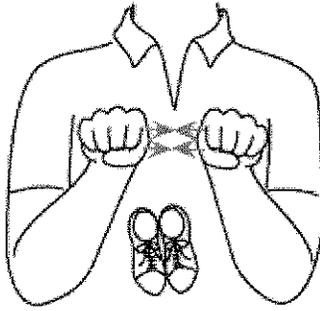
PLEASE

Palm rubs on chest in circle. (see APPRECIATE)



SAD

Open hands pull down in front of face.



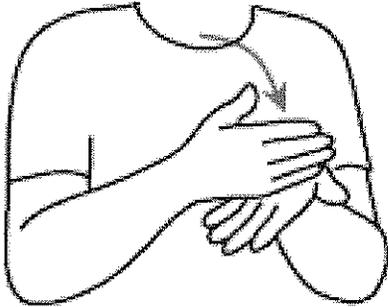
SHOE

Palm-down S's bump together twice. (See BOOT)



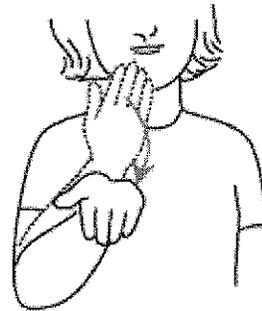
SICK

Bent middle fingers, touch right on forehead, and left on stomach.



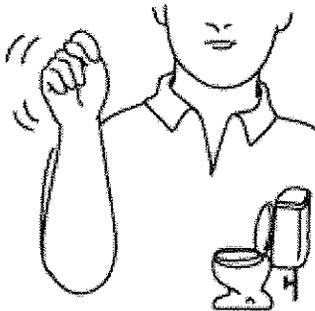
STOP

Side of right palm-left flat hand strikes left flat palm.



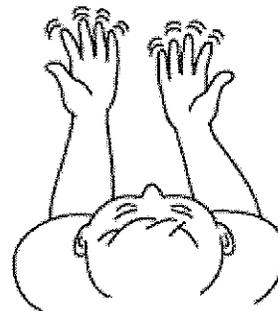
THANK

Fingertips of right palm-in open hand at chin drops to palm-up. (see GRATITUDE)



TOILET

Palm-out T shakes.



WAIT

Palm-up right hand behind palm-up left, all fingers fluttering.