



Presbyterian Weekday Ministries Conference

Words by the Handful: Enhancing Preschool Communication with Babies and Toddlers through American Sign Language *Mimi Brian Vance* August, 2011

What is "baby sign language"?

The use of American Sign Language with pre-verbal hearing children is referred to as baby sign language, signing with babies and a number of other names. With a few signs, a baby can communicate important needs and interests to their families and caretakers.

Benefits of Sign Language

- Enhancing language and vocabulary development
- Tempering the 'terrible twos'
- Stimulating cognitive development
- Promoting reading readiness

How does signing affect speech development?

How many signs are required to make signing with children a useful device?

Which signs are the best to use?

Variations and Adaptations of Signs

Incorporating Signs into the Classroom/ Resources for Parents

Ten Basic Signs:

Eat, Milk, More, All Done, Mama, Daddy, Bed/Sleep, Ouch, Please, Thank You



Words by the Handful ©

EAT

Pinch thumb and fingers together on one hand. Bring handshape up to your mouth.



Words by the Handful ©

MILK

Hand forms a semi-circle, then contracts to a fist. Repeat a couple of times.
(Mimic the motion of milking a cow.)



Words by the Handful ©

MORE

Pinch thumb to fingertips on each hand.

Tap tips of fingers/thumbs together a few times.



Words by the Handful (c)

ALL DONE or FINISHED

Hands are raised to shoulder level or just above. Palms face toward you. Then rotate hands to face away from you.



Words by the Handful ©

MAMA

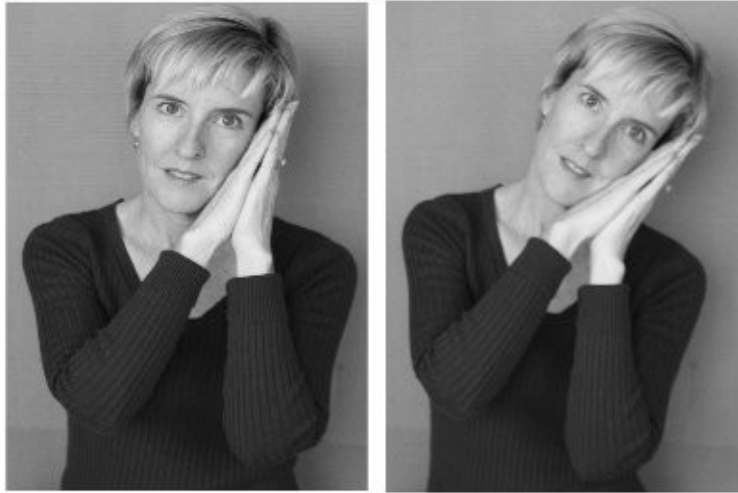
Put thumb to chin, hand open wide, fingers up.



Words by the Handful ©

DADDY

One hand opens wide, fingers spread. Place thumb against forehead, palm perpendicular to forehead.



Words by the Handful ©

BED

Put flat palms together, and hold them up to your cheek. Tilt head slightly, as if laying your head on a pillow.



Words by the Handful ©

OUCH or HURT

Tap tips of index fingers together a few times.



Words by the Handful ©

PLEASE

Move open palm in a circular motion on your chest.



Words by the Handful ©

THANK YOU

Palm is open, facing towards you, fingertips pointing up. Tap your chin, then drop your palm away and down until it is nearly flat, with palm facing up.

WORDS BY THE HANDFUL SONGS and SIGNS



MOO MOO BROWN COW

(Sing to the tune of Baa Baa Black Sheep, ABC, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star)

Moo, Moo, Brown Cow (COW)

Have you any milk? (MILK)

Yes sir, yes sir (YES)

Smooth as silk.

One for you (YOU)

and one for me. (ME)

And one for the kitty cat (CAT)

who lives in the tree. (TREE)

Moo, Moo, Brown Cow (COW)

Have you any milk? (MILK)

Yes sir, yes sir (YES)

Smooth as silk.

BABY BUMBLE BEE

I'm bringing home a baby bumble bee (cup hands as if holding bee - not bee sign)

Won't my Mama be so proud of me (MAMA)

I'm bringing home a baby bumble bee (cup hands as if holding bee - not bee sign)

OUCH! That bee stung me! (OUCH)

I'm squashing up my baby bumble bee (cup hands as if holding bee - not bee sign)

Won't my Mama be so proud of me (MAMA)

I'm squashing up my baby bumble bee (cup hands as if holding bee - not bee sign)

Eeeuw! It got me dirty! (DIRTY)

I'm washing off my baby bumble bee (CLEAN/WASH)

Won't my Mama be so proud of me (MAMA)

I'm washing off my baby bumble bee (CLEAN/WASH)

All done! No more baby bumble bee! (ALL DONE/FINISHED)

About Mimi Brian Vance

Mimi Brian Vance is a life-long language specialist. She grew up in Louisiana where the thick gumbo of languages and cultures permeated her life from the start. She speaks French and Spanish fluently, and can get by in a few others, including Swahili. Mimi traveled the world as a U.S. Diplomat for nearly a decade, and is now a passionate advocate of using sign language with pre-verbal babies.

With two children of her own, Mimi knows well how signing can change the life of a baby, a mom, a dad, and an entire family. She designed the Words by the Handful concept as an easy and family-friendly way to bring signs to life. It is based on the knowledge that even a few words – just a handful – can make a big difference in a baby's life.

Mimi Brian Vance is the author of the Words by the Handful series of children's storybooks on baby sign language. Her website, www.wordsbythehandful.com, has many resources for teachers, parents and librarians.

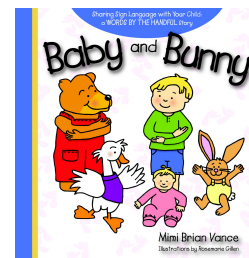
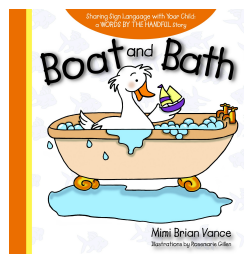
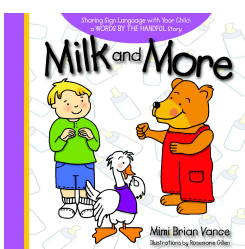


Words by the Handful Nurturing baby's earliest Language through Signs

Bring Signs to your Preschool Environment

Children's Books

Excellent Classroom Tool - - - Perfect School-to-Home Companion



Educational Materials

DVD Video Dictionary

Parent Orientation Seminars

Parent and Baby Classes

Resource-rich Website

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Additional signs and resources available at www.wordsbythehandful.com