



COMMUNICATION. ACCEPTANCE. EMPOWERMENT.

Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

June 2014

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American Sign Language is a LANGUAGE

By Bethaney Hall – Program Specialist

Imagine two small deaf children excitedly gesturing about their favorite super hero. One highlights the hero's appearance, a tall woman with brown wavy hair wearing a red and blue costume resembling the American Flag while the other demonstrates the superpower abilities in the hero's weaponized tiara, indestructible bracelets and a lasso that makes you tell the truth. To an outsider this would look like nothing but a handful of meaningless gestures. Yet to someone who has a vast understanding of American Sign Language would tell you these gestures represent all of the linguistics components: phonology, morphology semantics, pragmatics and syntax.

Without fully diving into the linguistic background of what makes American Sign Language a language, there are a few basic parts

that every new signer needs to know. There are five parameters of ASL: handshape, location, movement, orientation and non-manual signals (facial expressions). Here is a brief description of each parameter:

- Handshape – the shape of your hand
- Location – where the sign is placed
- Movement – the action of the sign
- Orientation – how the palm of your hand is positioned
- Nonmanual Signal – facial expressions

It's important to note that one or more parameter can alter the meaning of your sign. If I were to sign "woman", I would use a 5 handshape and place my thumb on my chin. If I wanted to sign "father" I

would use the same handshape and place my thumb on my forehead. The handshapes are the same but the location differs.

You may wonder how do facial expressions come into play. Facial expressions are used when asking different types of questions such as "wh" or "yes/no". They're also used when making positive or negative statements as well as conditionals.

If I were to ask a WH-question, then I would squeeze my brow and lean my head forward. If I were to make a negative brows furrowed, frown a bit and shake my head while signing.

All in all it's really important that you want to convey information as clearly as possible. American Sign Language is no exception.

If you're interested in learning American Sign Language you can contact Bethaney Hall at bhall@ccdhh.org.

UNDERSTANDING Hearing Loss

By Donna Carlton – Executive Director

Hearing loss has become one of the top 3 health issues in our nation, 20% of our population has hearing loss. It can happen suddenly or gradually over time or you can be born with it. Hearing loss ranges from mild, moderate, to severe and can be temporary or permanent.

What causes hearing loss – ear infections; excessive noise; genetics; accidents; natural aging process are some causes.

There are 3 types of hearing loss:

1. Conductive-problem with the structure of the ear which can be helped with medications or surgery.
2. Sensor neural is damage to the inner ear and can be helped with hearing aids and/or cochlear implants and is usually permanent.
3. Mixed meaning your hearing loss is different in each ear.

People often put off treating their hearing loss for various reasons:

- It happens gradually over time therefore it goes unnoticed;
- We compensate by stating people mumble or don't speak loud enough;
- Hearing aids are not attractive and we worry about what people will think;
- It is viewed as becoming old;
- Perhaps some feel it does not have an impact on anyone or it is not harming anyone but the individual.

If you think you have a hearing loss and want to learn more about your hearing loss, you can contact Donna Carlton at:

dcarlton@ccdhh.org

BENEFITS of Baby Sign Language

By Erin Bosch – Children & Families Coordinator



Exposure to language, any kind begins the moment the child is born, whether they're deaf, hard of hearing or hearing. If you have a child who is has a hearing loss or is hearing, sign language can help you communicate on a daily basis. Here are some benefits to learning sign language.

- The ability to communicate can lead to reduced frustration, fewer tantrums, and improved social skills
- Sign language can facilitate other forms of communication (verbal, written, and spoken)
- Infants who learn sign language may gain improved self-esteem and confidence
- Studies indicate using sign language with hearing children may provide enhanced literacy and language skills.

Further Reading:

- *Signing with Babies and Children: A Summary of Research Finding for Parents and Professionals* by Claire Vallotton, Ph.D.
- https://www.babysigns.com/pdf/C_Vallotton%20Review.pdf

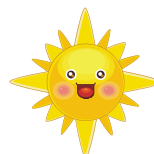
Helpful Sign Language Resources:

- <http://www.aslpro.com/>
- <http://aslnook.com/>
- <http://www.handspeak.com/>
- <http://www.lifeprint.com/>

If you're interested in our baby sign language classes please contact Erin Bosch at: 941-366-0260 or ebosch@ccdhh.org

CCDHH Summer Camp

By Erin Bosch – Children & Families



It's that time again! The Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is providing summer camp for deaf and hard of hearing children. We hope to see you there!

Who: Children with hearing loss, siblings of children with hearing loss, and children of Deaf adults

What: 4 days of free fun filled camp activities

When: Monday, June 16th through Thursday, June 19th 9:00AM-3:00PM

Where: Sarasota First Church of the Nazarene
3375 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL 34237

Please contact CCDHH staff to sign your child(ren) up by: **Monday, June 9th**

Erin Bosch, Children & Families Program Coordinator, ebosch@ccdhh.org
Donna Carlton, Executive Director dcarlton@ccdhh.org
Phone: 941-366-0260