

Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students
(cont.)

A deaf child born to parents who are deaf and already use ASL will begin to acquire ASL as naturally as a hearing child picks up spoken language from hearing parents. Nine out of ten children who are born deaf are born to parents who hear. Some hearing parents choose to learn sign language while introducing it to their deaf child. These children also learn sign language through deaf peers.



Thanks to newborn hearing screening programs in hospitals in the United States, babies are tested before they leave the hospital. If a baby has hearing loss, parents are provided an opportunity to learn more about communication options.



Learning American Sign Language

Everyone learns sign language at their own speed. It can take a year or more to learn and feel comfortable using individual signs for basic communication. However, learning American Sign Language takes more time and practice.



Sign language classes are available when learning ASL. You can also find many online resources and apps to assist with learning sign language.

To expand your knowledge of ASL, try practicing your signs with others who know ASL and can teach new words. People who know ASL typically:



- Exhibit patience when showing new signers how to sign
- Will demonstrate the correct way to sign something
- Adjust their rate of signing for understanding
- Are willing to repeat words or statements

Once you are able to communicate efficiently and effectively, you may choose to be an ASL teacher as well as an ASL interpreter.

Resources:

- “American Sign Language” (2019) Retrieved 6-13-19 from <https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/>
- “American Sign Language” (2019) Retrieved 6-13-19 from <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/american-sign-language>

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