

The Truth About Baby Sign Language (Facts Every Parent Should Know)

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SUMMARY

Baby signing may help reduce frustration and tantrums in infants by encouraging parents to be more responsive to their non-verbal cues, but its effectiveness is mixed. While some studies suggest benefits in parent-child bonding, there is limited evidence that baby signing significantly enhances language development or leads to earlier speech.

- *Baby signing can reduce frustrations by prompting parents to respond to non-verbal cues.*
- *Parents who engage in baby signing may become more attuned to their child's communication.*
- *Some studies indicate that mothers using baby signing may experience increased stress.*
- *Baby signing does not appear to significantly improve language abilities in typically developing infants.*
- *Research shows that baby signing does not cause speech delays or hinder language development.*
- *Responding to natural gestures can also promote bonding and communication without formal signing.*
- *Parents can explore various methods to encourage gestures and words beyond baby signing.*

- Baby signing is often recommended for a number of reasons. One of them being as a way to reduce your baby's frustrations and tantrums. But does it really help? The answer is maybe. A randomized control study completed by Dr. Elizabeth Kirk and her team in 2013 did find that mothers who were allocated to the baby signing group were more responsive to their baby's non-verbal cues. And of course this would help to reduce the baby's frustrations. This finding isn't that surprising, given that in order to teach a baby specific hand gestures or signs to indicate key concepts or words the parent needs to watch the baby very closely.

And that is firstly, to see if the baby signs at all so that they can respond on to it and encourage more signing as well as see if there's any opportunities to use sign during the baby's play or everyday activities. However, signing is not the only way that you can actually help to reduce your baby's frustrations and tantrums. You can help to alleviate your baby's frustrations by simply noticing and responding to their non-verbal cues, such as gestures.

For example, if your little one was to hit the table or the plate to indicate

that they wanted more food then of course you would give them more food. Or if they held their arms up to indicate that they wanted to be picked up, you would pick them up. Or if they pointed at their bottle or a toy then you would give them that item. When you respond appropriately to their spontaneous gestures you are teaching your child that you are listening and that you can help them.

And this will help to alleviate their frustrations and avoid possible tantrums. But the belief that baby signing reduces frustrations and tantrums, isn't the only reason that it has exploded in the parenting world. So let's go through each of the other potential benefits of baby signing. Starting with whether or not it improves a parent-child relationship. And the answer to that question is maybe. Studies have shown that mothers who use baby signing are more tuned in to their baby.

And by that I mean that they are watching their baby closely and responding to their little one's communication attempts by either interacting with them, giving them what they want or sharing a common interest. And of course this allows the opportunity for the parents to bond with the child, which will improve the parent-child relationship. However, on the flip side, a study completed by Howlett and colleagues in 2011, found that mothers who were enrolled in a baby signing program were more stressed than mothers who were not enrolled.

Also, it's important to note that you can promote bonding and improve the parent-child relationship by simply responding to your baby's use of natural gestures such as when they point to something hold an item out to show you or nod their head. But what about learning to talk? Will teaching your baby sign help them start to talk earlier? Before we answer that question, while we are on the topic of development, you haven't already make sure you download the free developmental checklist by clicking the link in the description box below.

So does baby signing teach a baby to talk earlier? Probably not. There is little scientific evidence that baby sign improves language abilities of typically developing infants. Also any improvements that have been noted in scientific studies show that the improvements are relatively short-lived. Although there is no strong evidence to suggest that baby signing improves the language development of typically developing infants, research has shown that baby signing doesn't stop a baby from learning to talk. And it also does not cause speech delays.

So what does this tell us? Well, baby signing isn't

going to get your baby to talk earlier and it's not going to get your baby to talk later. So if you want to do baby signing, then go ahead. There clearly are some benefits but if baby signing isn't for you then there's lots of different things that you can do at home to encourage them to start using gestures and words and to find out exactly what these are, then make sure you click on this video here.

Remember to click on that free PDF document. And I will see next week where I'll share more parenting tips and tricks.