



The Signing Smart™ Program Difference

- The curricula you are using was designed by two mothers of young signing children who have Ph.D.'s in Developmental Psychology from the University of California at Berkeley. Both are certified in ASL and also have extensive teaching experience with young children and families.
- The program is a national one that has worked successfully with countless families learning to sign with their young hearing children.
- For play classes (Beginner, Intermediate, and Holiday), while the method of teaching is through a play and developmentally appropriate activities – ideal for young children – central to its organization is a complementary parent-education piece.
 - At its heart, the parent-education component is designed to help parents better understand the linguistic and cognitive milestones of the first two years.
 - The program as a whole supports parents in using this new information, combined with signs to:
 - facilitate intimacy between themselves and their children
 - enhance their children's self esteem and sense of empowerment
 - complement children's interest in learning about and commenting on the world around them
 - The age group of the participants is children between 5 months and approximately 2 years and their parents.
- For the workshops, the method of teaching is through lecture, discussion, and audience participation activities.
 - Although the audience for the workshops is adults, as in all *Signing Smart* programming, the focus and emphasis is on children.
 - Therefore, we teach parent and caregivers more than just a list of signs or about signing from the parent perspective – we make sure to give parents a plan for successfully using *Signing Smart* with their children during everyday interactions and play.
 - Workshop age ranges:
 - The Beginner Workshop for Parents is designed for families with newborn through 2-year-old children.



- The Advanced Workshop for Parents is designed for families with children 18 months through 3 years.
- The Workshop for Childcare Professionals is designed for caregivers of infants through 3-year-old children.
- The Workshop for Preschool Teachers is designed for teachers of children 3-5 years of age.

How it differs from what is out there:

Signing Smart compared to doing it on your own:

While anyone can pick up an ASL dictionary, what families will get from the *Signing Smart* program is much more:

- In terms of play classes, signing in a class environment allows your child to see signs from individuals other than just you or your family. This allows signs to be a noticeable part of your child's world outside the home and speeds his or her learning tremendously
- Because you (the teacher) have worked with many families and have been trained in what to look for and how to read child approximations, you are able to teach parents how to tune in to their child's earliest sign attempts.
- The strategies we have developed are available nowhere else. By teaching parents how to bring signs into their child's world, the timeframe between children seeing the signs and signing back is shortened.
- Our programming is designed to help parents learn signs through the contexts in which they will be using them with their children. By integrating signs into everyday life with young children, families' experiences with signing will be more successful.
 - What does this mean in terms of the *Signing Smart* play classes?
Importantly, these classes are more than just a music class, where parents and children must learn signs only within the context of songs and then must learn how to pull them out of the songs to use for communication at home. Instead, we teach parents signs and strategies through play and props: in games, some songs, and activities. In this way, we allow parents to learn how to use signs and strategies "on-line" and in relevant, fun, and communicative contexts that are extensions of everyday life. Parents are then well-equipped to take what they learn in class and really use it at home!



- What does this mean in terms of the *Signing Smart* workshops? These workshops are more than just motivational lectures designed to get families excited about signing. They are designed to give each family a plan for starting *Signing Smart* – a plan that will take them from the earliest phases of signing with their infant or toddler well into the months (and years) that signing will be a natural part of their everyday interactions. The workshops take advantage of video clips of *Signing Smart* families using signs and *Signing Smart* strategies at home. These clips serve several purposes. Because children are not present at the workshops, the clips bring children into the room in a tangible way – allowing parents to see what signs look like on children’s hands, what using the strategies looks like at home, and what real families just like them took from their *Signing Smart* classes to facilitate success at home.
- *Signing Smart* classes are designed to foster both early communication and sustained learning. Parents will learn how to facilitate early signing as well as how to foster spoken language development and cognition in babies and toddlers, into the preschool years.

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