

WDE ACCOUNTABILITY

ASL Stages of Development

3 to 12 months

- Begins to notice signing.
- First sign may emerge from 10 to 12 months.
- Babbles with hands.
- Imitates facial expressions.
- Points to people, objects and places but not at self.

12 to 18 months

- Uses at least 10 signs.
- Begins to use points as pronouns.
- Acquires new signs but does not mark with inflections.

18 to 24 months

- Signs reflect basic handshapes with simple movements (straight forward, up, or down).
- Early signs not always produced according to adult conventional forms.
- Combines 2 or 3 signs, including points.
- Begins to distinguish and use non-manual markers (facial grammar).

2 to 3 years

- Sign order is used to show semantic relations.
- Begins to use classifiers to represent objects (with little or no movement); types of classifiers are limited by the handshapes child can produce.
- Begins to use varied inflected verb forms (directional/agreement, dual, temporal aspect).
- Attempts more complex signs but substitutes basic handshapes for the complex handshapes.
- Begins to use non-manual markers (raised/squinted eyebrows) for YES/NO and WH-questions.
- Demonstrates negation with headshake or sign "NO".
- Begins to use possessive (your, mine) and plural (US-TWO, YOU-THREE) pronouns.
- Refers to things around them during conversations and storytelling; may copy the actions and facial expressions of others in a story.

3 to 4 years

- Begins to mark distinctions between noun-verb pairs (FLY/AIRPLANE).
- Uses classifiers to show objects and movements of these objects.
- Begins to make modifications to verb signs to show the manner and amount of time involved in an activity (temporal aspect) by changing the movement of the sign and/or adding facial expressions.
- All "real world" pronouns (pointing at objects and people in the immediate environment) used correctly.
- Tells stories through use of objects or role-playing; may not always show clearly who is speaking or doing something.

4 to 5 years

- More complex handshapes and movement (wiggling fingers, twisting wrists) used accurately.
- Simple sentences still used, but complex (including topicalization and rhetorical questions) emerging.
- Begins to set up points in space to establish location for people and objects not present in the environment.
- Role-playing used more frequently with characters clearly identified, but skills to show changes in roles such as body shifts, eye gaze and facial expression not used consistently.

5 to 6 years

- Clear and consistent use of complex handshapes and movement.
- Fingerspelling used more.
- Use of complex sentences (including relative clauses and conditionals) continuing to expand.
- Use of verb modifications to show intensity, manner, number and distribution continuing to expand.
- Use of abstract referencing to talk about people and things not in the present environment.
- Storytelling becomes more "adult like"; makes frequent self corrections.
- Takes on a variety of roles during conversation and storytelling; changes in roles indicated through facial expression, body shifts and eye gaze are shown clearly and consistently.

References

Content adapted from the Early Childhood Education Department, California School for the Deaf, 39350 Gallaudet Drive, Fremont, CA.

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