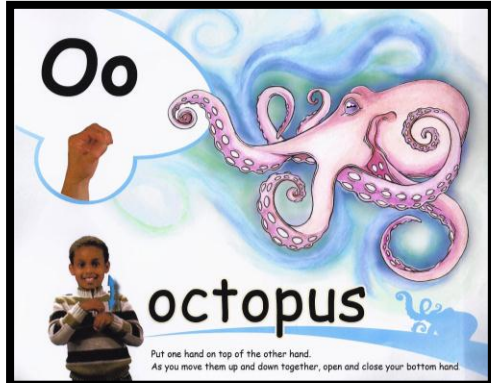


# Parents as Partners: Why We Teach American Sign Language

## Meeting the Challenge of High Common Core Standards: Take Advantage of How the Brain Learns Best!



### Why We Use Sign Language and Fingerspelling

#### Signing Songs and Fingerspelling Accelerates Early Literacy Skills.

Signing songs and manual fingerspelling engage the whole child in joyful learning. They add a kinesthetic memory connection for acquiring new skills and develop the small muscles necessary for writing. Singing and signing is multisensory; it combines "saying and doing," which increases retention of new

information and understanding of language concepts up to 90 percent. Research shows that learning sign language builds confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Reading the three-dimensional language of sign also develops visual skills for reading printed language. **High academic standards are met most easily when children are engaged and motivated.** Enriching children's literacy experiences by signing familiar songs encourages teachers and parents to become learners right along with their children. As an added bonus, children usually learn to sign songs more easily than adults, much to their delight!

#### Learning Sign Language is a Life Skill.

Not only does learning American Sign Language (ASL) give children enhanced literacy skills, but it also provides them with an important life skill for communication. **ASL is the third most commonly used language in the United States!** Proficiency in a second language is a requirement for high school and college graduation, and the optimum age to acquire a new language is during early childhood. **Additional language acquired while the child is young enhances their communication skills throughout life.** This is especially true of learning the emotionally rich American Sign Language. New language connections in a child's brain will develop much more quickly through song, as the child communicates whole sentences and phrases rather than isolated words.

#### Singing and Signing Enhance Speaking Skills.

Young children who are fortunate enough to learn ASL through accelerated language learning with songs at home, in preschool, and in kindergarten have an early advantage in developing expressive, dynamic speaking skills.

#### Singing and Signing Makes Learning to Recognize and Spell Words Easier.

Kindergarten teachers have discovered that singing and signing builds success for spelling and "word work" activities by making learning auditory, kinesthetic, social, and fun! **Most young children first become auditory spellers; they become visual spellers later.** By nature, children love to move their bodies. **Children's memory for the spelling sequence of words is dramatically improved through singing, signing, and fingerspelling.**