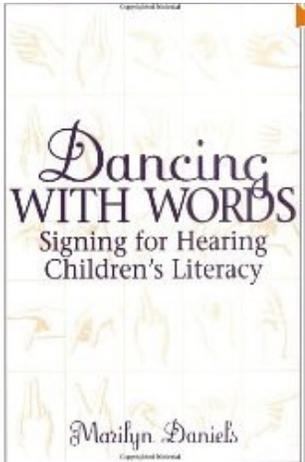


# Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy Is Supported by Extensive Research



Here are excerpts from a book we highly recommend:

## *Dancing With Words: Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy* by Marilyn Daniels

This book is about sign language and how sign language can be used to improve hearing children's English vocabulary, reading ability, spelling proficiency, self-esteem, and comfort with expressing emotions. Sign also facilitates communication, is an effective tool for establishing interaction between home and school, aids teachers with classroom management, has been shown to promote a more comfortable learning environment, and initiates an interest in and enthusiasm for learning on the part of students...

**The activity of manually fingerspelling a word reinforces a child's ability to write or read or say it.** Spelling a word strengthens existing associations among writing a word, reading a word, and saying a word. Clearly children need solid visual knowledge of letters to read well. When this visual knowledge is overlaid with the feel of the letter, reading becomes easier...

**However, well before children are able to form letters with a pencil, they can form letters with the manual alphabet.** Using the manual alphabet will activate the same formative link to reading as printing, but it may have an even greater effect on children's literacy because it can occur far earlier in their maturation process...

**The feeling signs are nearly all iconic. Because the signs visually represent feelings in discernible form, the child can comprehend the meaning of the word and relate the word to their own feelings.** They are congruent. Children find it easier to identify their feelings, to express their feelings, to discuss their feelings, to understand their feelings, and perform the same operations with the feelings of others...

Become an early partner with your child as together you dance with the words of ASL. Both your fingers and hands and your child's fingers and hands can create meaning in the air as you silently exchange messages in sign language. **For your child this dance will activate formative links in the developing brain; teach phonics, vocabulary, word recognition, and comprehension; become a precursor to the recognition of print; provoke positive feedback from others; give access to Deaf people; engender feelings of self-worth; and ultimately aid reading and spelling and communicative ability in general.** It is a dance with words, to be enjoyed from babyhood, through childhood, to adulthood.

Source:

Daniels, Marilyn. *Dancing With Words: Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2001. [www.greenwood.com](http://www.greenwood.com) [www.marilyndaniels.com](http://www.marilyndaniels.com)

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