Using American Sign Language (ASL) in your preschool or elementary school classroom will keep your students’ hands moving, their minds engaged and their brains learning! In this Guide, you’ll learn how this powerful tool can help you:

• engage students in learning
• improve academic outcomes
• create a more harmonious classroom

SIGNING HELPS STUDENTS BECOME MORE ENGAGED IN LEARNING

 Signing involves physical movement, which adds a kinesthetic element to learning. This physical movement engages students’ bodies as well as their brains, giving them a more intensive and multi-sensory learning experience. In addition, some signs are iconic (they look like what they represent). For example, the sign for bird looks like a bird’s beak opening and closing, which means that the form or action of the sign supports and strengthens understanding of the corresponding word. All of this physical involvement in learning pays off. Studies show that when words are presented orally, visually, and kinesthetically (through sign language), students’ scores on vocabulary tests are significantly higher than their non-signing peers.¹

SIGNING BOOSTS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Multiple studies have been conducted with hearing children who use sign language in their educational settings. Dr. Marilyn Daniels, an expert in this area of study, summarizes these research findings in her book Dancing with Words. Daniels reports that signing in the classroom:

• increases test scores
• increases vocabulary acquisition rates
• helps students focus, concentrate and remember content

In addition, Daniels says that research findings point to social benefits of signing in the classroom. Signing:

• can create a more harmonious learning environment
• generates enthusiasm for learning among students
• increases self-confidence and self-esteem

These important social benefits contribute significantly to optimizing academic achievement.

SIGNING IS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Sign language requires eye contact, which automatically helps draw students’ attention to the teacher. When teachers use signs to cue transitions and new activities, students will be prepared to look and listen for new directions. Signing with students while they line up and helps them stay actively engaged – and quiet – as they move through the hallways. Also, signing is an effective tool for helping younger students calm down. Teachers who sign in their classrooms report that signing helps create a more harmonious environment.

Classroom Edition
SigningTime.com/classroom-edition
OVERVIEW OF THE SIGNING TIME CLASSROOM EDITION

For teachers and parents who want a complete set of Signing Time resources to fully integrate signing into their curriculum, we’ve created the Signing Time Classroom Edition, which includes:

**16 themed learning units** full of fun and easy-to-do activities: At School, In My Classroom, Colors, Feelings, The Alphabet, Numbers, Getting Along, Family, Outside, Seasons, Eat and Drink, Fruits and Vegetables, Days of the Week, Pets, Farm Animals, and Zoo Animals.

**DVD segments** edited to correspond to the themes of each unit.

**Music CD with songs** from the DVD segments that relate to the unit themes. (Includes the sing-along versions for performance or practice.)

**Ready-to-copy handouts, flashcards, lyric sheets, and more**

**Background information** on Deaf culture, signing with children with special needs, classroom management and tips for effective teaching.

**SUCCESS STORIES**

I am both a mother and a teacher. I love using Signing Time in my home and my classroom. I have found so many uses for Signing Time in my classroom. Volume 13: Welcome To School is a great classroom-management tool. I use this DVD at the beginning of the year. As a teacher, I use many silent cues to communicate with my students so as not to disrupt the classroom atmosphere. These signs help me to communicate directions without ever using my voice.

Early childhood educators are always finding ways to reinforce the alphabet. Volume 5: ABC Signs is a great tool to reinforce classroom curriculum that is already being taught. Part of the first grade curriculum deals with teaching about a child’s community. Volume 11: My Neighborhood is a great way to help students identify all those things that make up their community.

In first grade, we teach about animals and their habitats. I use Volumes 7, 8, and 9 to reinforce

Anya Gregory, Kearns, Utah

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Robin L. Williams, MA holds a Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education and a Masters Degree in Teaching with a Reading Specialization from National University. She has a Clear Multiple Subject California Teaching Credential and taught elementary school for eight years. She has been using ASL for the past 13 years. Robin is a Thinking Maps Trainer of Trainers, and is a UCI Fellow with the Writing Project. Robin is a Master Signing Time Instructor and a stay-at-home mom with an infant and toddler who love to sign.

Jim MacCall is a first grade teacher in the Lower Merion School District, outside of Philadelphia, PA. Jim has been teaching for 37 years in first grade. Jim holds a BS of Education from West Chester University and a Master of Education from Temple University. Jim is a Master Signing Time Instructor certified through the Signing Time Academy. Jim has been using sign language for 3 full years with his first grade class. This past school year Jim instructed all children in the first grade in sign language.

If you are new to signing, don’t worry. The Classroom Edition is written in a clear and concise way and is full of illustrations and multi-media resources to help you get started. All you need is a desire to learn and a few minutes a day to bring the powerful benefits of signing to your students.