Learn a New Language

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE

May 21, 2009 by cpehrson

Have you ever wished your 8 month-old could tell you why he is crying at 3 in the morning? Or wished that your 10-month old could tell you that she wanted juice instead of milk, when she throws her sippy cup on the floor? Imagine avoiding that potential meltdown when you understand that your 13-month old is signing that he wants to wear red socks (yes specifically the color red!) and not the blue socks you have already picked out!

Teaching American Sign Language (ASL) signs to infants (and toddlers between the ages of 6 months to 36 months) provides them with the powerful tool of early communication and facilitates communication between parent/child and/or caregiver and child. There are many benefits that can come from a young infant knowing basic signs that he can use to communicate his needs. Two of the most important ones are: 1) Frustration and outbursts are lessened, because the baby can immediately communicate his wants/needs until he can physically pronounce it, and 2) Speech development is enhanced; most baby signers speak earlier than babies who do not learn baby sign language. Basic ASL is easy to learn, and with practice, becomes second nature to those who use it with their children.

American Sign Language is the 4th most used language in the United States. About 2 to 4 of every 1,000 people in the United States are “functionally deaf,” according to the Gallaudet Research Institute in Washington D.C. ASL is widely used by deaf and hearing-impaired people. ASL is known as a living language, as there is a growing culture of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and ASL is the native language of this culture. As the culture grows and evolves, so does the language.

ASL is also a beautiful way to communicate with your hands and to interpret the words of songs. All things considered, ASL will enhance your life, whether you have children or not; whether you are deaf or know someone who is deaf or not. Learning ASL is like learning a new language.

The Disability Resource Center on the USU campus is offering FREE American Sign Language classes this summer beginning the week of May 25th. You can choose from the following class times: Tuesdays @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Wednesdays @ 12:00 noon –1:00 p.m.; Thursdays @ 2:30-3:30 p.m. Space is limited. To register, contact Angie Olsen, Deaf Services Coordinator at 797-0104 or angie.olsen@usu.edu.