



# Tips for Facilitating Vocabulary Development

A resource guide on vocabulary development in young deaf and hard-of-hearing children



## Visual Engagement and Attention

- Allow the child to shift gaze between you & an object/picture
- Keep all information in the child's view
- Move into the child's field of vision
- Wiggle fingers in front of the child
- Tap the child repeatedly

[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]



## Playful & Meaningful Interaction

- Look at books together & incorporate signs, fingerspelling, and gestures  
(e.g., *pointing at pictures or tracing words*)
- Other than names of things & people, incorporate opposites in daily activities
- Encourage turn taking, sign "my turn" & "your turn"
- Explain where you're going & what you're doing

[1]



## Successful Activities

- Games are engaging and fun for children
- The primary goal is communication, so it is not always important to follow the rules, especially with young children
- Games and activities should match the child's attention span (increasing with age)

[1]

[1] Enns, C., & Price, L. (2013). Family involvement in ASL acquisition. NSF Science of Learning Center on Visual Language and Visual Learning Research Briefs, 9. [2] Erting, C. J., Thumann-Prezioso, C., & Benedict, B. (2000). Bilingualism in a deaf family: Fingerspelling in early childhood. In P. E. Spencer, C. J. Erting, & M. Marschark (Eds.), *The deaf child in the family and at school: Essays in honor of Kathryn P. Meadow-Orlans* (pp. 41-54). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. [3] Gale, E., & Schick, B. (2009). Symbol-infused joint attention and language use in mothers with deaf and hearing toddlers. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 153(5), 484-503. [4] Maestas y Moores, J. M. (1980). Early linguistic environment: Interactions of deaf parents with their infants. *Sign language studies*, 26(1), 1-13. [5] Waxman, R. P., & Spencer, P. E. (1997). What mothers do to support infant visual attention: Sensitivities to age and hearing status. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 2(2), 104-114. [6] Erting, C. J., Prezioso, C., & Hynes, M. O. (1994). The interactional context of deaf mother-infant communication. In V. Volterra & C. Erting (Eds.), *From gesture to language in hearing and deaf children* (pp. 97-106). Berlin: SpringerVerlag. [7] Mather, S. M., & Clark, M. D. (2012). An Issue of Learning: The Effect of Visual Split Attention in Classes for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students. *Odyssey: New directions in deaf education*, 13, 20-24.

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