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RECORD-COURIER

Sign Language Camp offers 'signing as a second language'

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Laura Nethken
about 15 hours ago



A Sign Language Camp, sponsored by the Hiram College Center for Science Education, was held recently at the Hiram College Field Station Observation Building.

The camp was designed for parents and their children, from infants and toddlers to older children and children with special needs.

The biggest question from most parents is "My baby can hear, why should we learn to sign?"

According to the camp instructors and the video "Signing Time: My First Signs," signing with a baby can offer a parent a view into the baby's thoughts and needs, help reduce tantrums and empower babies to express themselves and feel understood long before speech develops.

According to Signing Time, 25 years of scientific research shows that hearing babies who sign typically have a number of benefits including earlier communication -- babies can produce signs as early as 6 months old, long before their ability to speak develops.

Signing babies average between 8 and 13 point higher IQs, have fewer temper tantrums and less frustration. They have improved confidence and self-esteem, are better adjusted and tend to speak and read early.

Signing supports spelling and can offer results for children with speech or communication challenges, as well as other special needs.

According to Signing Time, signing helps children link symbols (signs) with concepts (meaning) and the spoken word.

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It provides another mode of learning (tactile and kinesthetic) and increases bonding because signing is face-to-face communication.

Other benefits, according to Signing Time, include clarifying speech (does "Ba" mean baby? bottle? ball? bug?), a parent being able to communicate with their child when verbal communication is difficult or frowned on (either quiet places or noisy places or from a distance on the playground) and easier and earlier diagnosis of health problems.

Other benefits include children being able to express themselves when they may be too shy or embarrassed to speak, offering exposure to a second language and an easy bridge to other spoken languages. Signing also provides an opportunity to befriend children who use sign to communicate, and provide an alternative means of communication when speech may be difficult, such as after a tonsillectomy, laryngitis, etc.

For more information, to find classes, or to buy Signing Time supplies, call Kim at 330-527-0278 or visit www.signingwithabass.com.

(photo)

Justin McCune helps out Kenny Mangan, 9, with his signing.

Kim Bass leads her students in sign language class and starts off with the alphabet.



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