

Toddler Tasks in Simple Signs

Sh! Don't tell! Make learning new tasks fun - *and educational!* Help your toddler sing and sign his/her way to developing coordination skills while providing an incentive for following directions. Hone listening and language skills as words, music, movement, and meaning are blended into this signed presentation.

While we have introduced simple tasks suitable for toddler mastery, there are even more that you could add. We deliberately did not include 'brush my teeth,' 'button a shirt,' 'put on my socks,' 'hang up my coat,' 'blow my nose,' 'read my book,' and 'hold Mom's hand.' These could very easily be adapted for the child as pantomime actions rather than deliberate American Sign Language translations.

This flexibility within a small group, like a family, leads to what we educators call "home signs" or "family signs." These gestures may already be familiar to other family members, and are indeed useful tools for enhanced communication rather than for Deaf cultural conformity. One disadvantage of pursuing this method is that the 'universality' of ASL may be lost as the child starts his or her own social networking beyond immediate family members: teachers, caregivers, doctors, and other children.

Sing and sign to the traditional tune of "*Here we go 'round the Mulberry Bush*"

Words

This is the way I...



wash my face
brush my hair
tie my shoes
wash hands
make my bed
clean up my toys
I say please/thanks
share my snack
eat my vegetables
empty the trash
water the plants
go to bed
say my prayers
... so early in the morning / evening




Signs

This how...

wash face, me
brush hair, me
tie shoes, mine
wash hands, me
ready bed, mine
pick up toys, me
say me please/thanks
share snacks, me
eat vegetables, me
make empty trash
water plants, me
go bed, me
pray, me
...morning, early / night, early

Sample graphics demonstration of Signed actions

	
This	how

		
wash	face	me

Excerpts from our 'Cheat Sheet' for Toddler Tasks in Simple Signs

Sign	Description of Action
thank you	With open hand, touch lips, and then extend hand outward, keeping palm facing the face (as if throwing a thank you kiss).
wash	Rub the knuckles of closed hands (palms facing each other) as if washing a cloth.
water	The letter "W" signed at chin level.

About the Authors and Artists

Elaine Ernst Schneider entered the classroom as a special education teacher in the 1970's. Since then, she has taught mainstream English Grammar, Literature, music K-12, deaf education, psychology, Algebra, creative writing, social studies, law, and science in both public and private schools. Presently, Elaine is a curriculum author for multiple educational publishers and is the managing editor of Lesson Tutor, a lesson plan website found at <http://www.lesstutor.com>. Her most recent books, *52 Children's Moments* (Synergy Publications) and *Taking Hearing Impairment to School* (JayJo Books and the Guidance Channel) can be found at Amazon.com. She is currently working on a project with Pearson Prentice Hall as an author of an on-line teacher's professional development course for the Council for Exceptional Children.

Joanne B. Mikola is the co-founder and CEO for the www.lesstutor.com website. Joanne's life-long passions include creative problem solving, puzzles and mysteries. These were constantly fueled with her past career choices of Operating Room nursing and post-graduate teaching, and are currently maintained by motherhood and computers.