

I am Deaf
Let's 
talk

25 Signs to Learn for
First Signs Families

deaf.org.nz



Deaf
AOTEAROA
TANGATA TUHI



HELLO
I am Carter.

I'm one year old. I love dinosaurs and bubbles.
Come and learn NZSL with me!



Deaf Aotearoa

Deaf Aotearoa is the Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO) representing the voice of Deaf People, and the national service provider for Deaf people in New Zealand.

Deaf Aotearoa's services include:

- First Signs – access to NZSL and language development for families of deaf children age 0 – 5
- Youth Service – activities that develop strong Deaf identities and leadership skills, and providing a youth internship programme
- Employment – a transition programme and job seeking support, and supports Deaf people to retain their employment or upskill
- Hauora – needs assessments, assistive equipment, and information and advice
- iSign – NZSL interpreting services that assist communication between Deaf and hearing people.

Deaf Aotearoa works closely with Deaf communities, government agencies and other organisations to increase awareness, promote NZSL and strengthen the rights of Deaf people.

Deaf Aotearoa is the New Zealand representative to the World Federation of the Deaf.

Deaf Aotearoa also provides education and awareness courses to organisations that want to learn about Deaf culture and NZSL. These courses can be tailored to accommodate organisations' interests and time requirements.

Deaf Awareness courses

Get an insight into the Deaf world, explore NZSL, Deaf culture and the community through these interactive courses. They're ideal for breaking down communication barriers for businesses, groups and organisations.

NZSL Courses

NZSL courses are tailored to your environment. Courses can teach basic principles of NZSL including NZSL grammar and common words and phrases. Courses can also be designed to teach words and phrases specific to your environment. NZSL courses can be provided in a setting that suits you, for example, First Signs family's home, Kindergartens or Early Childhood Education centres.



For more information visit deaf.org.nz

NEW ZEALAND SIGN LANGUAGE WEEK

TE WIKI O TE REO TURI

Every May, Deaf Aotearoa organises New Zealand Sign Language Week – a celebration of one of the country's official languages.

NZSL Week is a chance for the Deaf community to stand proud as Deaf, and to celebrate their language and culture. It also works to break down barriers, fears and misconceptions. NZSL Week lets Deaf New Zealanders put their hands up and be seen!

Our vision for NZSL Week is to increase awareness and understanding of NZSL and the Deaf community, and to empower and strengthen the Deaf community.

For more information visit nzslweek.org.nz



NZSL CLASSROOM TASTER CLASSES VISUAL NEWSLETTERS DONATIONS ABOUT NZSL AWARDS MEMBERSHIP



NZSL Week Events

See what's happening in YOUR region



NZSL Visual is funded partly by grants and donations. [View more](#)



School registrations for all areas are now closed. Registrations for businesses are still open but some areas have already reached capacity and any extra registrations will be added to a waiting list.

Registrations for businesses are closed in the following regions:

- Auckland
- Auckland
- Wellington

We apologise if you weren't able to register for a Taster Class in your region, but be sure to keep an eye out on the website for events in your area!

To register your business, organisation, club or museum please fill in the form

Note: <https://nzsl.co.nz/business-and-education/for-businesses-and-organisations/>

These classes will run throughout May, this year at a venue of your choosing

FREE NZSL Taster Classes

Register for a FREE 45 minute New Zealand Sign Language Class. Learn Sign with our sign every day!

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH A DEAF PERSON

A conversation with a Deaf person is the same as a conversation with a hearing person – Deaf people just use different communication tools.

Like hearing people, Deaf people are unique individuals with interesting qualities and skills. They have families, jobs and hobbies.

You can communicate with Deaf people in several ways, including New Zealand Sign Language, spoken/written English or a mix of these.

Appropriate use of gesture, body language and facial expressions can also be very effective, as Deaf people communicate visually.

Not all Deaf people can lip read well. It's estimated 70% of lip reading is guesswork, even if the speaker articulates clearly. That's why relying solely on lip reading as a way to communicate isn't recommended.

Face the Deaf person and get their attention before speaking. Eye contact is very important so try to maintain it and don't turn away while the Deaf person is signing.

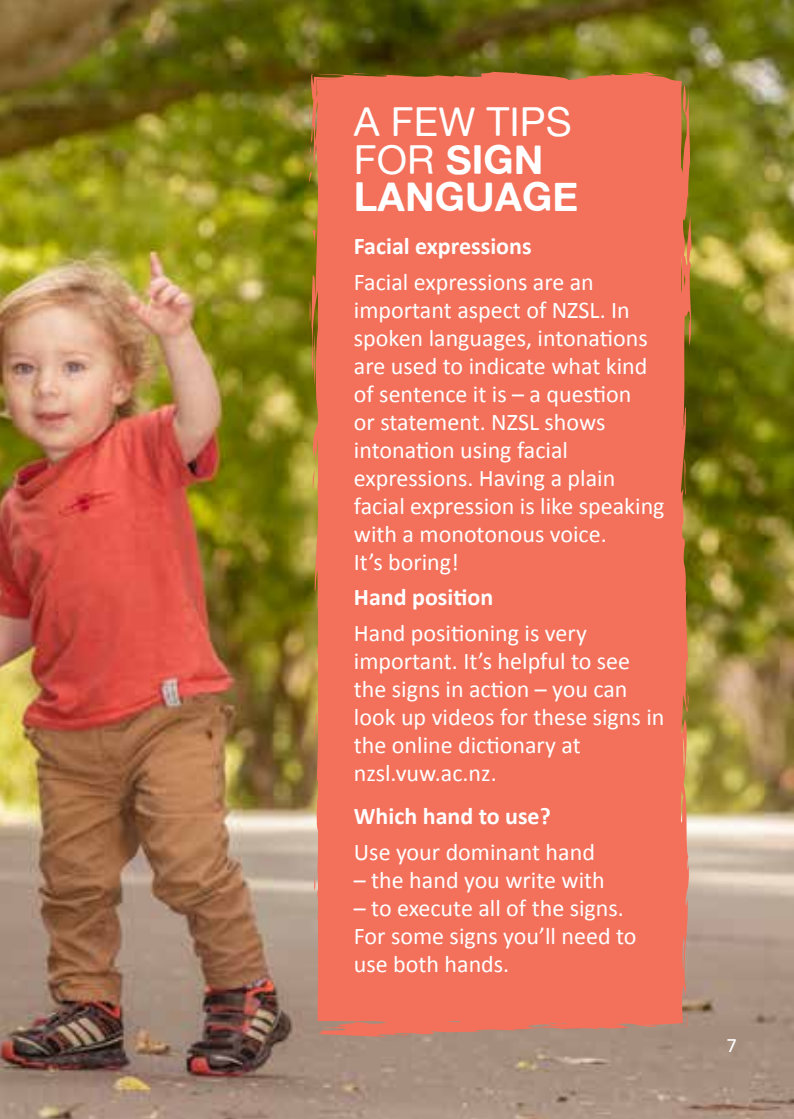
Using a New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter is the best way to ensure full communication occurs. Booking an interpreter is easy and quick and will avoid communication breakdowns.

To book an interpreter, contact iSign:

www.isign.co.nz

0800 934 683 or Free TXT: 3359

bookings@isign.co.nz



A FEW TIPS FOR SIGN LANGUAGE

Facial expressions

Facial expressions are an important aspect of NZSL. In spoken languages, intonations are used to indicate what kind of sentence it is – a question or statement. NZSL shows intonation using facial expressions. Having a plain facial expression is like speaking with a monotonous voice. It's boring!

Hand position

Hand positioning is very important. It's helpful to see the signs in action – you can look up videos for these signs in the online dictionary at nzsl.vuw.ac.nz.

Which hand to use?

Use your dominant hand – the hand you write with – to execute all of the signs. For some signs you'll need to use both hands.

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25 SIGNS TO LEARN FOR FIRST SIGNS FAMILIES

This is one of a series of booklets designed to introduce you to NZSL. It gives you a practical opportunity to quickly learn some basic vocabulary relevant to your environment.

Learn these signs and use them as often as you can. Tell your friends about them and share the wonderful gift of NZSL. Then you'll understand why 20,000 New Zealanders use it every day!

ALSO AVAILABLE:

25 Signs to Learn at Work

25 Signs to Learn for the Weekend

25 Signs to Learn for Māori Concepts

25 Signs to Learn with Your Family

25 Signs to Learn for Medical Situations



me



INSTRUCTIONS

Point to your chest with the index (pointing) finger of your dominant hand (your writing hand).



mum



INSTRUCTIONS

With your dominant hand flat, tap the side of your forehead twice with the fingertips.



dad



INSTRUCTIONS

Making a flat looking zero with your dominant hand, tap the side of your forehead twice with your gathered fingertips.



#NZSL

WITH

ART

brother



INSTRUCTIONS

Bring both your fists together, palms facing each other, knuckles touching. Rub fists together at the fingers, up and down, twice.



sister



INSTRUCTIONS

Make a fist but curve your index finger, like a hook. Bring the hook to the bridge of your nose and tap twice.



dog



INSTRUCTIONS

Bring both of your flat hands, bent and relaxed at the wrist, to the front of your torso. Move your arms up and down from the elbow, lightly.



cat



INSTRUCTIONS

Bring your thumbs and index fingers to your face, thumbtips to the sides of your chin. Move your hands apart (outwards) as you close your index finger to your thumbs. Do that whole movement twice.



swim



INSTRUCTIONS

Do a freestyle swimming motion with both hands, but just in front of your chest, not all the way over your head.



walk



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your dominant fist with index finger and middle finger extended like legs, and briefly 'walk' them in front of your torso.



book



INSTRUCTIONS

Start in the middle of your torso with your hands closed, palms touching (like praying), then open your hands out like a book.



look/watch



INSTRUCTIONS

Make a fist with index and middle fingers extended. Hold your fist at the side of your cheek with fingers pointing forwards and move your hand forward and slightly downwards.



who?



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your fist with index finger extended (like making a number 1) finger pointing upwards, palm facing back at you, then move your arm in small anticlockwise circles.



what?



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your fist with index finger extended (like making a number 1), hold your fist out in front of you, palm facing forward. Shake your hand side to side a few times.



where?



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your open hands, palms facing upwards, to the middle of your torso. Move your hands horizontally apart to your sides (outwards) and then back again.



come



INSTRUCTIONS

Gesture with your flat hand, bending it at the wrist towards you.



more



INSTRUCTIONS

Make a loose claw shape with your hand. Take your hand to the middle of your chest, fingertips touching the chest, and then move your hand forward slightly out from your chest.



finish



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your fists and extend your thumbs (like the gesture for 'good'), hold your fists out in front of your torso slightly apart, then twist the wrists inwards rapidly several times.



happy



INSTRUCTIONS

Hold the non-dominant (non-writing) hand at the middle of your torso, palm facing upwards; then take your dominant hand palm facing downwards (as if to clap). Clap the upper palm, move it in a clockwise direction, skim lower palm on its way back around.



sad



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your flat dominant hand, bring it to your nose so that your palm is facing sideways and the side of your index finger is touching your nose. Slowly drag your hand down your nose vertically.



funny/laugh



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your fist and make a hook with your index finger and also extend your thumb, then hold your fist at your chin with your palm facing to you, and shake it up and down twice.



play



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your open flat hands, palms facing upwards, hands held out in front of you. Move your lower arms in vertical circles (from your elbows), your left arm circling anticlockwise and your right arm circling clockwise (mirroring).



hungry



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your flat open dominant hand, place it on your torso with your palm touching your tummy, and make small circles against your tummy.



bath



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your fists and place them against your chest, slide them up and down your chest as if you're washing yourself. Make sure that as the left fist slides down your chest, your right fist slides up. Repeat a few times.



nap/sleep/bed



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your flat hand, place it on the side of your head, and lean your head into your palm.



awake



INSTRUCTIONS

Take your fists with index fingers and thumbs pressed together at the fingertips, bring your pressed fingers to the outside of your eyes and then open your fingers and thumbs as if you're waking up quickly.

THANKS!

Deaf Aotearoa would like to thank Shaun Fahey (illustration) and Esther Bunning (photography) for their contribution to the development of this booklet. Particular thanks also to the Ferguson family.



New Zealand Government

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For more information visit deaf.org.nz



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