

ku:sign

# Parent Information Pack

**kids**unlimited nurseries

# Engage

## What is ku:sign?

Signing involves using simple hand gestures and signs with babies and toddlers before they can talk. We use **ku:sign** in our nurseries starting with babies from six months. **ku:sign** empowers non-verbal communicators, especially babies and younger toddlers, as they become able to control their physical movements. They can express their needs and make themselves understood. Signing also acts as a support to children who may have difficulty or delays in their communication.

## What are the benefits?

- **ku:sign** helps take a lot of the guesswork out of being a parent or carer
- **ku:sign** enables you to share their excitement with them before they can talk
- It can reduce a child's frustration with communication as you can understand them
- Research shows that new communication skills such as **ku:sign** helps babies longer-term mental development

There are huge benefits for older children in the nursery too as **ku:sign** helps:

- Reinforce memory and creative skills
- Serve as a language bridge in a multi-lingual classroom
- Reduce noise levels
- Develop language and literacy
- Reduce frustration
- Increase interactions between children and the nursery staff
- Support children who have difficulties or delays with their communication



## A few helpful signs



### Milk

The milk sign in baby language imitates the motion of milking a cow; so with that in mind, bring your fingers into your palm, making a fist and return to beginning position.



### Please/Thank you

Touch your fingertips to your chin and then rotate your hand down and away from your body so that the hand finishes horizontal, palm up.



### Finished

Do two thumbs-up and wave them around in small circular movements away from each other.



### Drink

Cup your hand in front of and below your mouth, and tilt it back and forth in a drinking motion.



### Sad

Brush the side of your hand (thumb to nose) down your nose to your chest, and look sad.



### Happy

Brush one horizontal palm against the other a couple of times—and remember to look happy!



### Nappy

Snap your fingers together at the sides of your body.



### Sleep

Your thumb and first finger act as your eyelids—close your index fingers onto your thumbs to mime closing your eyes.

## A few helpful signs



### More

Pat one flat palm and fingers against the back of your other flat hand a few times.



### Eat

Bunch the fingers of one hand together and make little in-and-out movements by your mouth.

## Golden Rules of Signing

### 1. Choose signs that are relevant to your child

We often start with “Milk” and “More” these are very motivating for most babies. Choose signs you feel are suitable for your own personal situation and your child’s likes and dislikes.

### 2. Always say the word as you sign

This way you’ll be helping your child to make the link between the word and the object, and helping their language skills to develop.

### 3. Always sign in context

Make sure your child is looking at the thing you’re signing and can clearly see your face and hands too.

### 4. Repeat, repeat, repeat!

To help your child to learn the sign, try to use it every time you say the word. The more you repeat the word and sign, the quicker your child will pick it up.

### 5. Keep going

Depending on your child’s individual development and their age, you might have to sign for a while before your little one signs back to you. Babies who have been signed to consistently could start signing any time from 6 to 10 months, sometimes later but if you are consistent they will sign to you. Be patient and persevere and it will certainly happen.

## Frequently asked questions

### **What is ku:sign?**

From six months babies are capable of understanding and communicating, however their ability to speak does not develop until they are 12 to 18 months old. That's where the value of signing is realised. From as early as six months, babies are able to make signs to let you know what they're thinking.

### **Is there an ideal time to begin signing?**

Your baby will be capable of learning signs from the age of six months. It will not be detrimental to start earlier but there will be a correspondingly longer period to wait before your baby starts to sign. This is due to the need for your baby to develop memory and co-ordination to recognize, remember and make the signs. The earlier you start, the earlier you can 'talk' to your baby or in the case of older children support the development of their communication skills.

### **How long will it take for our baby or child to produce the signs?**

All babies (and parents) are different and several factors will dictate the time it takes for your baby or child to start to sign. These factors range from the age of your child to how frequently parents and / or carers use the signs. The consistent use of a few signs on a daily basis has proved to be a key method for success.

### **Why is our baby not signing even after we have been using signs for a while?**

The speed at which babies learn to use signs can depend on their age. They will be able to start learning signs from as young as six months however will usually take a few weeks to start signing back to you. Older babies will tend to be able to pick it up faster. It can take a while for a baby to become confident enough to sign but as long as you keep reinforcing the signs during your daily routine your baby will start to sign.

### **But if they're signing, won't that delay talking?**

No. Just the opposite, in fact. All the research shows that learning to communicate earlier gives babies a real head start in life – especially talking. They'll start to talk earlier and develop their vocabulary faster than non-signing babies. And the longest running research study available has shown that, even at the age of eight, they'll still be significantly ahead of their classmates.