

Critical Review: Does Baby Sign Language have a Positive Affect on the Language Development of Typically Developing, Hearing Infants of Hearing Parents?

Jennifer Paling

M.Cl.Sc (SLP) Candidate

University of Western Ontario: School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

children of deaf parents, atypically developing

Conclusions

It appears that the literature available on baby sign language with typically developing hearing children under the age of 36 months with hearing parents is still in its early stages. Based on this literature, and its inconsistent results, parents should neither be encouraged nor discouraged from introducing symbolic gestures to their infants.

Parents who were not already considering using sign language should not be encouraged to start based on the lack of evidence to show that there is any advancement in language development as a result. Articles that claim benefit are flagged with methodological weaknesses. Johnston et al's (2005) systematic review was unable to confidently compare or summarize studies included in the review because of poor scientific methods. Their review failed to support claims that signing facilitates language