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Benefits of Sign Language Instruction for Young Children:

-  2-sided brain activity that increases brain functioning
 - Visual right brain usage
 - Cognitive second language left brain usage
 - Creates additional connection or synapses in the brain
-  Learning a second language makes additional language learning easier
-  Raises communication awareness and abilities
-  Enhances children's vocabulary
-  Can create higher IQ levels in children
-  Enhances children's confidence and self-esteem
-  Enhances reading skills
-  Enhances fine and gross motor coordination
-  Enhances language acquisition
-  Assists Special Needs Children in Communication and Language Acquisition
-  Students in pre-kindergarten classes who receive sign instruction test score significantly higher on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and benefits were maintained in kindergarten

Classroom Benefits:

-  Lowers children's noise levels in the classroom
-  Reduces need for teachers to raise their voice
-  Enables class to support special needs children
-  Children pay better attention, they have to see you
-  Sign language gets their attention better than the spoken word
-  Reduces instances of errant behavior
-  Provides children the ability to express emotions
-  Increases children's use of manners
-  Retention of special needs children

Research to validate the benefits of signing for young children has been provided by Dr. Marilyn Daniels in her book *Dancing with Words* and other academic journal publications. An excerpt from her forward to *Time to Sign, Inc.'s Learning Guide* provides a little more insight into her findings is as follows:

“my research shows hearing children who used sign in their pre kindergarten and kindergarten classes scored better on vocabulary tests and attained higher reading levels than their non-signing peers. The studies of others in this country and the United Kingdom are confirming my results.

Using sign language encourages language-delayed and shy children to increase their language acquisition skills in a relatively pressure-free manner. It is difficult for some children to speak well, but with sign the children are on a more level playing field and don't feel inhibited. In addition, children are more attentive simply because they have to be. When you are speaking to someone you don't really have to make eye contact, but when you're using sign language, you naturally and unconsciously focus your attention on the person signing. This improves the quality of the communication.

The added benefits of signing derive in part from its unique status as both a visual and kinetic language. There are individual memory stores for each language a person knows, even at the initial stages of acquiring the second or third language. You intake sign with your eyes, using the right side of the brain. Then like any other language, sign is processed and stored in the brain's left hemisphere. This operation creates more synapses in the brain, adding to its growth and development. It also helps to establish two memory stores in the left hemisphere for language, one for English (or the native language) and one for ASL. So children who use both develop a built-in redundancy of memory, storing the same word in two formats in two places.

Furthermore, because visual cues are taken in with the right side of the brain while language engages the left using ASL activates both sides of the brain at once. In the same way that bilingual children develop greater brain function, users of sign language build more connections or synapses in the brain than those who use English alone and because of the kinetic component of sign language, the ASL brain benefits even more than the bilingual one because of the dual-hemisphere work. Babies using sign language are simply building more brain.”