SIGN LANGUAGE FOR LIBRARIANS: COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

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OBJECTIVES

• Discuss the benefits of librarians learning sign language
• Briefly go into the history of sign language
• Provide reliable resources librarians may use to locate sign language useful for their community
• Have the opportunity to practice some sign language they can use instantly
BRIEF INTRODUCTION

• Who I am

• Why am I qualified to lead this discussion?

• Who currently uses some sort of sign language in their programs?

• Where do you find those resources/signs?
BENEFITS OF LIBRARIANS LEARNING SIGN LANGUAGE

• Sign Language continues to be popular among parents. It gives young children a way to communicate before they actually have the verbal vocabulary.

• “Research shows that early use of sign language has other benefits as well. Babies have the conceptual ability to comprehend and use language long before they develop the skills to speak, so real communication in sign can occur as much as a year before speech” (MacMillan, 2005)
BENEFITS OF LIBRARIANS LEARNING SIGN LANGUAGE

• Research is also starting to show that exposure to foreign languages in the first few years of life increases the ability of the brain to learn new languages later on.
  • This is a wonderful thing to keep in mind for ALL languages used during story time.

• We can give children and parents a way to communicate with each other!!
HISTORY OF SIGN LANGUAGE

• The first record of a signed language was in the early 17th century (Dawn Sign Press, 2016)

• However, as long as there have been humans walking the earth, there has probably been some form of signed language.

• 1620: First known book on sign language is published by Juan Pablo de Bonet – “teaching mute people to speak”, manual alphabet

• 1755: Abbe Charles-Michel de l’Epee of Paris founded the first public school in Paris for deaf students
1815: Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet travelled to Europe to study methods for teaching the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Invited to visit one of the schools for the deaf in Paris, met Laurent Clerc; sailed back to America with Clerc teaching Gallaudet Langue de Signes Francaise.

1817: Gallaudet and Clerc opened the first of their schools in Connecticut (Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons).

1864: Gallaudet University founded.

IS ALL SIGN LANGUAGE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE?

• American Sign Language

• Signed English

• Signed Exact English

• Other countries

• Made up/gestures
GOALS FOR LIBRARIANS (DALTON, 2005)

• Babies: signs incorporated into stories, fingerplays, and rhymes; encourages parent-child interaction; stimulates language development

• Toddler: focuses attention on important concepts, encourages children to participate in language

• Preschool: used to establish routines and expectations
GOALS FOR LIBRARIANS (DALTON, 2005)

• Elementary: all of the above; exploring the language, feelings, and cultures of others

• Middle/High School: all of the above; explore the language and its cultural background in more details; overcome prejudices
RESOURCES

• Signing Time (www.signingtime.com)

• ITV Signed Stories (Youtube)

• ASL Pro (www.aslpro.com)

• American Sign Language University (www.lifeprint.com)

• Singing Savvy (www.signingsavvy.com)
PRACTICE TIME

Additional handouts will be provided for this section of the presentation
REFERENCES
