

SIGNING WITH THE SPECIAL NEEDS ENVIRONMENT!



Welcome to a wonderful world of discovery for both you and the person with special needs! What you are about to read/learn, could change your environment and the life of the involved individual with special needs as Sign Language is used worldwide as a trusted tool of communication for many hearing individuals with special needs.

One of the most frustrating aspects of children / adults with special needs (for ex. Autism, Down Syndrome, Verbal Apraxia, Learning Difficulties, Brain Disorders, Cerebral Palsy etc.) is the breakdown in communication. Many struggle with the complexity of spoken language but yet have the ability to communicate. Sign Language creates an avenue of communication that strengthens speech and language development. There are several ways to help children / individuals to talk but the most popular way is to teach speech through the utilization of Sign Language. Sign Language and verbal communication can be taught simultaneously, therefore demonstrating the spoken words and mastered signs can go hand in hand.

What is Sign Language?

Sign Language was originally developed in order to provide a communication system for people with hearing-impairments. However, the signs of Sign Language can also be taught to babies / children / individuals with special needs or who has difficulty in communicating verbally due to medical conditions, disabilities etc. Many elderly also struggle to communicate for example after a stroke, accident etc.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW: In the Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing communication, Sign Language is a language on its own (like English, Setswana, Sepedi etc). It has its own rules, for example on how sentences are constructed, which is not the same as with a spoken language. But when signs are used as an AAC tool (Augmentative and Alternative Communication), the signs of Sign Language is used, without necessarily taking the Language rules of Sign Language into consideration. The reason for this being, when the child or individual derive spoken language from the use of signs, the verbal words will come out in the spoken language format as desired.

Important to know is that the signs are applied with VERBAL communication and the rules of verbal communication therefore apply. In other words, when children / individuals are trained in the use of signs, they are also trained in verbal communication at the same time. This type of training has been shown to result in faster receptive and expressive vocabulary gain than with simply teaching vocal imitation.

Therefore, Sign Language is a wonderful tool for parents, therapists, families of children / individuals with special needs within each of their specific environments.

Sign Language provides numerous social, emotional, cognitive and communicative benefits, such as:

- **Stimulation Of Speech And Language Development**

The visual stimulation provided by Sign Language activates the same centres in the brain that are activated by speech. This provides evidence that the development of Sign Language mimics the development of speech, and may even strengthen the connections in the brain that are needed for verbal communication.



- **Reduction Of Negative Social Behaviours**

Children / Individuals with special needs typically display negative social behaviours such as anxiety, self-injury and aggression. These behaviours are intensified when the individual cannot communicate basic needs and wants. Sign Language offers access to communication and eases the frustration felt when he/she is unable to express themselves!



- **Increase In Social Interaction**

Sign Language provides a way for individuals to express themselves. Expressive and receptive language skills are the building blocks for social interactions. Once the person involved is able to express him/herself he/she will be more likely to seek out social interactions.



- **Bonding / Relationship**

For the parent, caregiver, teacher, therapist, family member etc. there are many benefits in utilizing Sign Language. They would be able to enjoy a more interactive experience with the individual involved as well as decrease the anxiety faced when communicating.



TINY HANDZ has developed this programme by which the parent/ care giver/ educationalist/ therapist/ social worker/ family member etc. is taught basic signs to again, teach to the child / individual involved. Simple and common categories are used to teach within the worksessions:

HERE ARE SOME OF THE CATAGORIES TAUGHT IN THE BASIC SIGN LANGUAGE WORKSHOP 1 AND 2:

- FOOD
- ANIMALS
- COLOUR
- SHAPES
- FAMILY AND PEOPLE
- HOME
- WEATHER AND NATURE
- EMOTIONS
- ACTION
- VARIOUS
- CLOTHING



Intermediate Training Workshop 3 and 4 are also presented to those who have completed the Basic Sign Language Training 1 and 2 and wish to learn more in categories like School, People and Related, Time, Sport, Stationary, more Food, specific Verbs etc). *These categories are put together after months of careful research was done within various specific special needs environment and more categories can be added on request if for a specific group.*

With training the following material is also given:

- A Training guide that provides more information and is used alongside with the training session.
- Laminated A4 Posters (As per category) to be used at home or in a classroom during the learning process.
- A certificate
- CPD points to professionals attending (Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Social Workers, Psychologist and anyone else registered with the HPCSA OR SACSSP)

*Other more specialized training is also provided to those **health and rehabilitation institutes** that work with special need adults. Please contact us to find out more about this training and what it entails.*

THE TINY HANDZ WORKSHOPS

Training is provided all over South Africa, depending on demand / group setting.



BASIC SA SIGN LANGUAGE Training Classes are presented by means of Two Worksessions:

In Worksession 1 the advantages of Signing is explained as well as guidance with regards to the learning/teaching thereof in the home, school or special centre environment. Video clips are shown of people and children who have benefited from the use thereof. Over 130+ signs are taught in a very practical and enjoyable manner.

Time Period: 3.5 hours

In Worksession 2 around 140+ more signs are taught, problem areas are identified and attendees get the opportunity to interact by means of communication as part the practical session. A certificate is given upon completion.

Time Period: 3.5 hours

Visit www.tinyhandz.co.za for more info and to view comments of attendees.

NOTE: Both workshop 1 and 2 are compulsory and needs to be completed for the Basic Sign Language Training to be completed. In other words, Workshop 1 cannot be attended without also attending workshop 2. The two flow very much into each other. They may well be presented on two different days or one day; availability of dates permitting.

INTERMEDIATE SASL Training (Workshop 3 and 4) can then be attended if you / your group would desire to learn more signs in the categories as already mentioned.

So, it can be arranged for both classes to be done on the same day or in two following-up days, weekdays or over weekends.

See our pricelist on our Training Schedule as per our e-mails sent or on our website.

Visit www.tinyhandz.co.za for more info and to view comments of attendees.

Disclaimer: "Sign Language works differently with every individual and the use of Sign Language will not necessarily make an individual talk or eliminate all challenging behaviours etc. Every individual is different and not every therapy works for every individual."