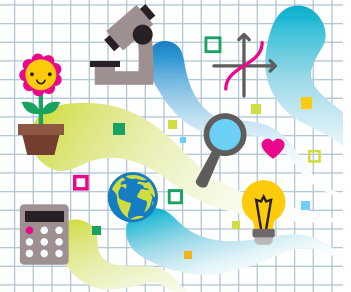




HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Signs & Gestures Instructions for Set-Up

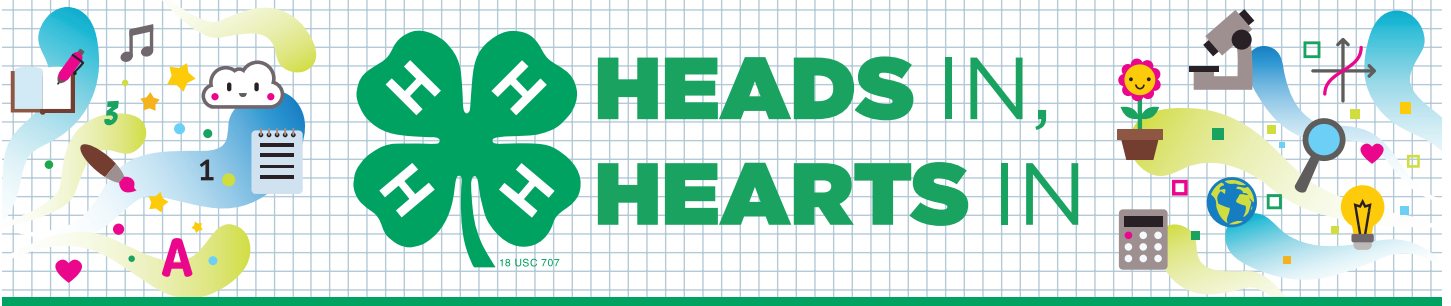


Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- 2 bowls
- “Signs and Gestures” handout
- 12 small pieces of cereal, raisins or small toys
- Laundry basket, plastic tub or box
- 4 balls or rolled-up socks
- Display table

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Print the “Signs and Gestures ” handout.
- ▶ Arrange display table with instructions.



Signs & Gestures

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Social emotional health is a critical component of healthy development for young children. Social emotional development includes the ability to identify and label or name emotions, and find appropriate ways to express or manage those emotions. For young children, strong emotions can be overwhelming. Since they do not have the skills to handle them, they might act out, get clingy or withdraw. You can help them manage their emotions by giving them permission to feel the way they do, helping to identify how they feel, supporting them and teaching them emotion regulation strategies. You can teach them multiple ways to feel calm and then let them decide which technique they want to try.

What you will do and learn:

In this activity, you will teach the child signs or gestures to communicate. Then you will encourage the child to communicate using those signs. Young children are often frustrated when they can't communicate what they need. Teaching children simple signs or gestures to communicate can help the young child be able to tell you what they need. It will not only help them communicate, but it will also show the child that you are tuned in and responsive to them. When the child communicates a need and you respond, they learn they can trust you with their problems and big emotions.

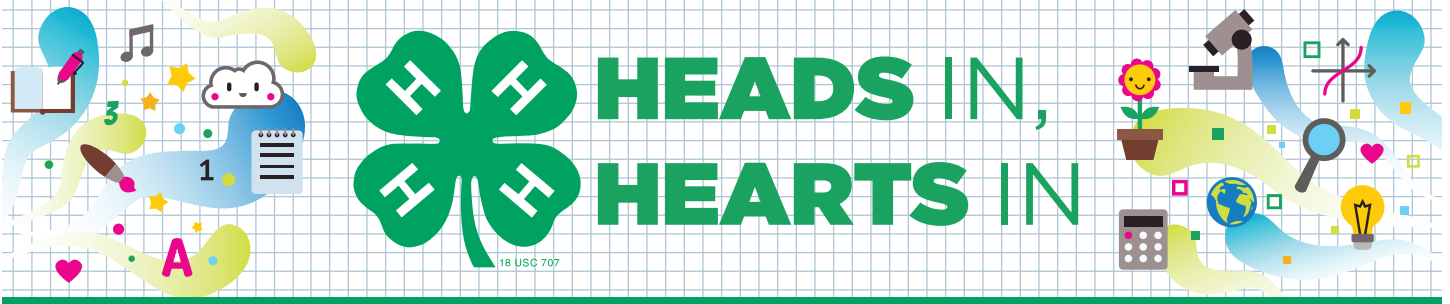
Instructions

Practice with one gesture at a time so the child does not get overwhelmed. After they learn one sign, wait a few days before teaching the next one.

More

1. Teach the child the sign for “more,” using the “Signs and Gestures” handout as a reference. Show the child the sign and encourage them to practice making the motion.
2. Give the child a small piece of cereal, raisin or a small toy and tell them to put it into the bowl.
3. Encourage them to show you the sign for “more” and when they show it to you, give them another item. Continue playing until all the items are in the bowl.

Instructions continue on next page.



Signs & Gestures

Guide for Families

Help

1. Teach the child the sign for “help,” using the “Signs and Gestures” handout as a reference. Show the child the sign and encourage them to practice making the motion.
2. Place a laundry basket, plastic tub or box on the floor.
3. Gather a few balls or rolled-up socks and hold onto them.
4. Give a ball or rolled-up sock to the child and ask them to “make a basket” and put it in the laundry basket, plastic tub or box.
5. Celebrate with them when they get it in.
6. When they are ready for the next ball or rolled-up sock, encourage them to show you the sign for “help.”
7. When they show you the sign, pass them the ball or rolled-up sock and encourage them to make a basket.
8. When they have put all the balls or rolled-up socks in the basket, encourage them.
9. Repeat the game as many times as the child wants.

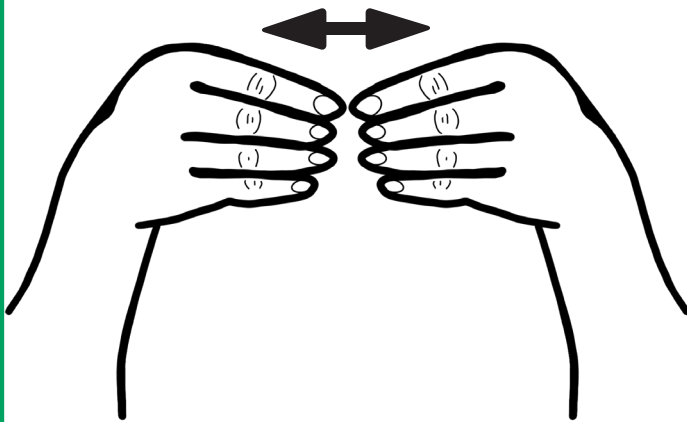
Stop

1. Teach the child the sign for “stop,” using the “Signs and Gestures” handout as a reference. Show the child the sign and encourage them to practice making the motion.
2. Tell the child you will be playing a moving game and that when you show them the sign for “stop,” they have to “freeze,” or stop moving.
3. Ask the child to take big, giant steps. And after a few steps, show them the sign for “stop” and say, “Stop.”
4. Encourage the child to freeze.
5. Take turns with the child. Now you take big, giant steps and encourage the child to show you the sign for “stop” when they want you to freeze.
6. Continue to play the game, picking different ways to move (teeny tiny steps, jumps, hops or other movements).
7. Repeat the game as many times as the child wants. Once the child has learned the sign for “stop,” try showing them the sign without saying “Stop” to see if they can follow the directions.

Signs & Gestures

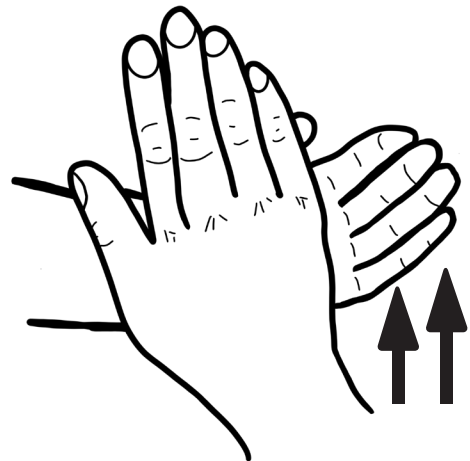
Signs & Gestures Handout

MORE



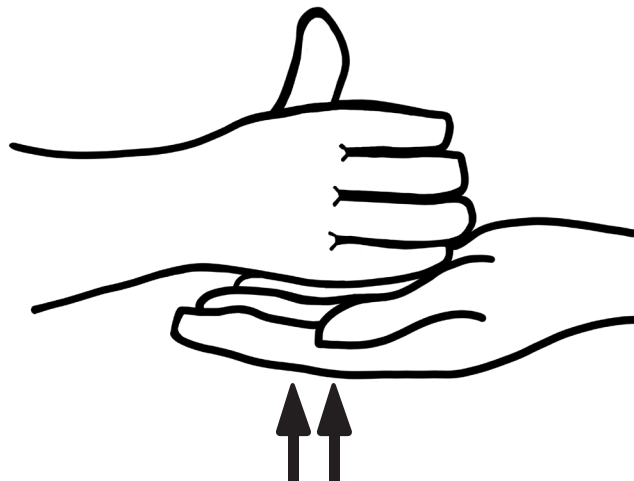
Action: To make the sign for “more,” bring your fingers and thumbs together on both hands, and then tap your fingers together in front of your body.

STOP



Action: To make the sign for “stop,” place one hand in front of your body with your palm facing up. With your other hand, keep your fingers straight and turn your hand so it’s facing up and down, and place it on top of your flat hand. Move your top hand up and down like you are chopping.

HELP



Action: To make the sign for “help,” place one hand in front of your body with your palm facing up. With the other hand, make a thumbs-up sign and place it in your other palm. Keeping your hands together, lift your bottom hand up like it is helping move your top hand.