

Abstract

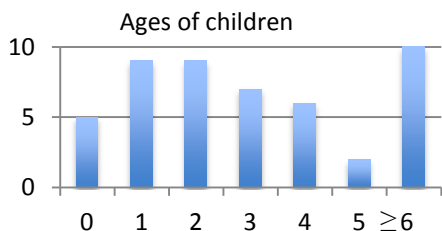
The current research study examines results from a survey that was created to learn what parents and caregivers know and feel about the use of sign language with young children. We addressed the areas of communication, emotion regulation, and affects on intelligence, and looked at how these areas are perceived by participants as well as what current research reveals.

Introduction

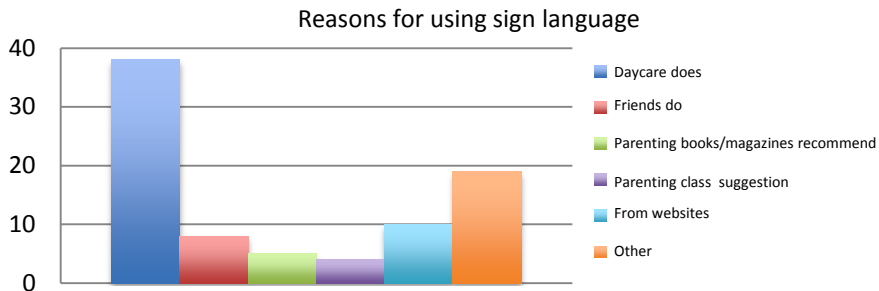
- Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet advocated for the use of sign language with children to promote communication.
- Children are capable of learning and using sign language. Caregivers who use sign language with children can more easily read their emotions (Daniels, 1996). This allows the child to express their independence (Kirk, et.al., 2013).
- Some books and websites promote the idea that teaching children sign language can raise their IQ scores in later childhood. Recent studies have questioned this idea arguing that there is insufficient evidence to support this notion (Nelson, White, & Grewe, 2012).

Methods: Participants

- N= 60
 - Teachers: 33
 - Parents: 27



Results



Data Collection

Sample questions from survey

- Communication
 - I think children who use sign language can express their needs. (For example: if a child is hungry.)
- Emotion
 - I think caregivers who use sign language with children are more responsive to child's needs.
- Intelligence
 - I think children who use sign language will score higher grades.

Discussion & Recommendations

- Children are capable of learning sign language
- Sign language is seen as a useful tool in communication and caregivers are more responsive to the child
- Not confident that it will increase child and caregiver bonds and unsure if there are any intellectual benefits
- Sign language should be used as a tool to help child communicate with caregiver. It is important to pair the signs with the spoken word to help child develop language skills.

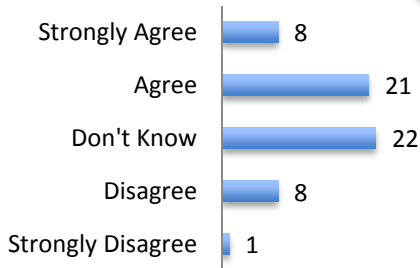
References

- Daniels, M. (1996). Seeing language: The effects over time of sign language on vocabulary in early childhood education. *Child Study Journal*, 26(3), 193.
- Kirk, E., Howlett, N., Pine, K., & Fletcher, B. (2013). To sign or not to sign? The impact of encouraging infants to gesture on infant language and maternal mind-mindedness. *Child Development*, 84(2), 574-590.
- Nelson, L. H., White, K. R., & Grewe, J. (2012). Evidence for website claims about the benefits of teaching sign language to infants and toddlers with normal hearing. *Infant & Child Development*, 21(5), 474-502.

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Emotion
 "Young children grasp it quicker than speaking. It can empower them. Improve communication." -Teacher

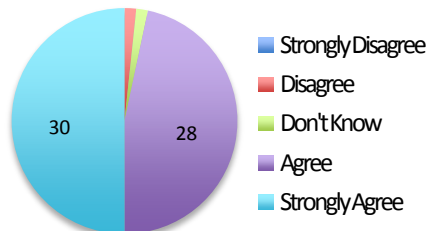
Stronger bond to caregiver



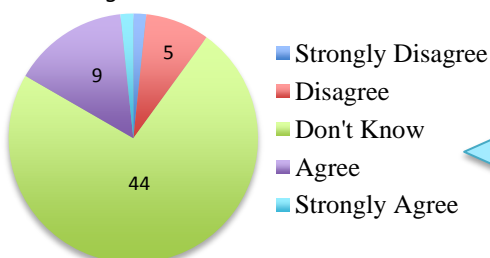
Communication

"I believe that one of the biggest advantages to a young child using sign language is that it enables them to communicate their needs when they don't yet have the words to correctly communicate their needs. Frustration levels are lower & a good communication basis is established." -Teacher

More responsive to child's needs



Score higher on IQ tests



Intelligence

"I feel it can be beneficial at a very young age. I don't know that it will help children as they progress into school age" -Parent