

Sing, Sign & Story Time

Tips & Tricks for Weaving Sign Language into Your Story Times

Presented by Dawn Babb Prochovnic, MA

I. Welcome, Introduction and Overview

II. Tips for Getting Started

1) Build Signing into Existing Routines

- a. Opening Routines (“We’ll learn the sign for bowl, when we read this book”)
- b. Recurring Elements of Story Time (i.e. bubbles or bouncing games)
- c. Closing Routines (“We’ve had so much fun singing...but now we are all done”)

2) Sign When You Read

- a. Keep it Simple
 - i. One word that repeats throughout the text (“Silly” in “Silly Sue”)
 - ii. One word per page (“Colors” or “Yellow” in “See the Colors”)
 - iii. A support word like, “Where?” (“Where is the duck?” in Famous Fenton)
- b. Show a Sign Ahead of Time and Ask Kids to Sign When They Hear the Word (Baby/Little One in “See the Colors”)
- c. Don’t Be Afraid to Put the Book Down or Sign “One-Handed” (or use your body as an easel) (Bowl/Friend/Peas and Corn in “The Big Blue Bowl”)

3) Sign When You Sing and Chant

- a. Add Signs to Familiar Songs and Rhymes
 - i. Start by adding one or more signs to a song/rhyme that you do all the time
 - ii. Don’t Be Afraid to mix and match signs with gestures you already use
 - iii. Add more signs as you learn more signs

“Five Little Monkeys Sitting in a Tree”

b. Modify Familiar Songs

“If You’re Hungry and You Know it Ask to Eat”

c. Use Music Written for Signers

Sign2Me’s “Pick Me Up” CD and many Signing Time CDs/Soundtracks

4) Use Props

- a. “Where is the ball/book/doll?”
- b. “Baby needs a bandage”
- c. “This bear needs to eat/get a diaper change”

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5) Play Games and Do Craft Projects that Incorporate Signing

*Game Ideas Include:

- a. Babies: “Swing to My Lu” (Sign “swing,” “baby” and/or “more/all done”)
- b. Preschoolers: “Dance/Jump/Hop and Stop”
- c. School Age: “Sign Language Guessing Game” (Meow = C-A-T or “Cat”)

*Craft Project Ideas Include:

- a. Placemat for Food Signs (use construction paper and old magazines)
- b. “I Spy Sheet” for Animal Signs (use construction paper and old magazines)
- c. Deck of Cards for Color Signs to Play “Go Fish” (use index cards)
- d. Alphabet Cards for Finger Spelling Games (one person spells words with cards, other person finger spells or signs the word—use index cards)

*Many More Ideas:

- a. In the back of my “Story Time with Signs & Rhymes” books
- b. On my blog: dawnprochovnic.com (and in the other blogs I link to via my blog)
- c. In Abdo’s Sign Language Event Guide (link to this from my blog)
- d. In other books listed on Resource Guide

III. Things to Remember When Building Your Signing Plan:

1) Start With Existing Story Time Plan, Then Add Signing to Your Plan

2) Keep It Simple and Build Gradually

- a. “Sign of the Day,” or “One Sign Per Story Time”
- b. One sign per book/song (start with books/songs *you* are familiar with)
- c. One sign per book/song that is different than the last time
- d. One sign per page of a familiar book
- e. One sign to go with your theme
- f. One sign for a familiar routine

3) Signing Should Be Fun!

- a. If you’re getting stressed out, slow down, and pull back some on signing.
- b. If you’re getting nervous, focus on mastering one sign before moving on to another.

IV. Additional Resources

- a. See Resource Listing
- b. Paper Dictionaries and Web Dictionaries (find links via www.smalltalklearning.com and www.dawnprochovnic.com)
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(Additional Resources, Cont.)

- c. Online Book Glossaries (Find via Dawn's blog, or fill out contact sheet to receive links to Glossary PDF Files)
- d. Videos/Music (Signing Time is fabulous!)
- e. Board Books (some are ASL, some are Baby Signs)
- e. Picture Books: Story Time With Signs & Rhymes (Abdo Publishing)
- f. Network with Parents and Each Other
- g. Dawn's Community Outreach:
 - i. Complimentary remote support
 - ii. Theme-based classes or book readings
 - iii. School/Library Author Visits
 - iv. Professional In-Services/Teacher In-Services
 - v. Scout Troops/Home School Groups Visits & Playgroup Starter Sessions
 - vi. Free Online Lesson Plans & Instructional Resources via my blog: www.dawnprochovnic.com (bookmark "summary posts" tab)
 - vii. Follow Dawn on Facebook: Dawn Babb Prochovnic
 - viii. Invite Dawn to one of your events

(Screen Shot From "Summary Posts" Tab)

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Dawn Babb Prochovnic
Greetings! I'm the author of "The Nest Where I Like to Rest," a 2011 Oregon Book Awards Finalist, and 15 other picture books in the Story Time With Signs & Rhymes series (Abdo Publishing Group) and the Founder of SmallTalk Learning.
[View my complete profile](#)

Upcoming Events and Appearances
OAEYC Spring Conference
Lane Events Center, Eugene
Saturday, April 20, 2013
Sign Language Beginner Basics for Early Literacy (and Fun!)
Sign Language for Transitions & Transportation Professionals

OLA-WLA Joint Conference
April 24-26, 2013
*ABDO (my publisher) will be in the Exhibit Hall and signed copies of my books will be available.
*I'll be attending the conference

Summary Posts

Periodically, I write a *series* of posts on a particular topic. At the end of the series (or when a number of posts on the topic has accumulated), I create a "Summary Post" or "Round Up" on the topic.

Below is the list of Summary Posts/Round Ups I have posted thus far. Hopefully this will provide you an easy access point to link to all of the related posts in a series that interests you:

- [Capture That Story: Self Directed Student Learning Project on Creating Book Trailers](#)
- [Quick Ideas for Getting Started with Signing](#)
- [Six Key Skills for Preparing Children to Become Readers](#)
- [Start to Finish Story Time \(Story Time Lesson Plans\)](#)

Check back from time to time, as I will update this list regularly.

 Recommend this on Google


16 Books in the Story Time Series Now Available, including this story about a Mama hen's quest to safely hatch her eggs.

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Helpful Extras

- [Links to Online Dictionaries and Other Resources](#)
- [Dawn Reading and Signing, "One Trick for One Treat"](#)

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Books & Related Resources:

Dancing with Words: Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy, by Marilyn Daniels, Ph. D. This book summarizes Dr. Daniels' research regarding the literacy and language development benefits associated with early exposure to Sign Language.

Random House Webster's Concise American Sign Language Dictionary: Just about any sign that you might want to look up is at your fingertips. The explanations that describe the movements of the signs are also helpful. \$7.50

Sign with your Baby, by Joseph Garcia, Ph. D., known for pioneering the research on the benefits of using sign language to communicate with pre-verbal, hearing children.

Book: \$14.95 / **Quick Ref. Guide:** \$9.95

Signing Fun: A kid-friendly dictionary full of signing games and activities. Penny Warner (Gallaudet University Press, 2006)

Simple Signing With Young Children. Murray, C. (2007). Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House.

Signing Time Flash Cards: These cards are a great companion to Signing Time music and videos. Beautifully illustrated and fun to explore with your child: \$39.99 each set.

Story Time with Signs and Rhymes: Fun, original stories that you can sing and sign to. Written by Dawn Babb Prochovnic and Illustrated by Stephanie Bauer. (2009-2012, Magic Wagon/Abdo Publishing Group). \$19.95 per title (discounts avail).

Try Your Hand at This: Easy Ways to Incorporate Sign Language into Your Programs. K. MacMillan, 2005). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Videos/CDs:

Pick Me Up! CD and Activity Guide: Fun songs and activities for signers of all ages. \$36.95. (Northlight Communications)

Signing Time From their animated tree house, Alex (who can hear) and Leah (who is Deaf) invite infants and children to "Come sign with us!" Watch and enjoy as Alex, Leah, and all their friends share. Many volumes to choose from. (CDs /\$13.99 ea; Set of 3 DVDs w/ CD \$65)

Baby Signing Time More wonderful DVDs and CDs, geared for the very youngest signers (Set of 2 DVDs and 2 CDs/\$55)

Workshops/Private Instruction/Consultations:

Contact: Dawn Prochovnic at SmallTalk Learning (**Blog:** dawnprochovnic.com) dawnp@smalltalklearning.com, 503-223-5622, **Facebook:** Dawn Babb Prochovnic **www.smalltalklearning.com** -- Please take advantage of the information on our web site **http://www.smalltalklearning.com/workshops/schedule.html** -- Current Schedule **http://www.smalltalklearning.com/research/relatedsites.html** -- Great ASL Links!

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Start Sample Blog Post:

START TO FINISH STORY TIME, SEE THE COLORS: Sign Language for Colors

(Sample Copied From One of Dawn's Blog Posts)

<http://www.dawnprochovnic.com/2013/01/start-to-finish-story-time-see-colors.html>)

Props/Supplies:

*Include one or more of the following to enrich the learning environment:

- Colored mats (or carpet squares/scarves/fabric samples) for children to sit on
- Colored hats for a playful hide and find song/game (described below)
- Colored scarves for dancing or playing hide and find games
- Colorful blanket
- Felt board and felt pieces for story retellings
- Colored balls/blocks/ for free play
- Paper, colored markers, and other basic art supplies

Sing an Opening Song to Practice/Introduce Signs:

*I Often Sing, "This is the Way We Sign for Yellow/Green/Brown/Pink/Etc" to the tune of "Here We Go "Round the Mulberry Bush," but any opening song that incorporates words/signs for the colors introduced in the book will work.

*I find that it is more fun to introduce the signs by singing vs. simply showing the signs and asking participants to sign along/practice with you. ([Click here](#) for links to a series of past posts where I delve into the topic of singing and signing).

*Don't feel obligated to introduce/incorporate all of the color signs included in the book the first time you share it for a story time. Let your comfort level be your guide. At a minimum, introduce the primary colors, [yellow](#), [red](#), and [blue](#). There is a signing glossary at the back of "See the Colors," or you can download the glossary from my publisher by [clicking here](#) (scroll down past the Star Wars Event info).

Read (or sing) the "Story Time with Signs & Rhymes" Story: "See the Colors," by Dawn Babb Prochovnic, Illustrated by Stephanie Bauer.

*Before you begin reading, invite children (and/or their grown ups) to:

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- 1) Sing/chant the repeating phrases at the beginning of each page spread along with you (i.e. "See the yellow, see the yellow, see the yellow little one . . .")
- 2) Sign "["baby"](#) or "["child"](#)" each time they hear the repeating phrase, "Little One."
- 3) Sign each color word when they hear it.

NOTE: "See the Colors" can be sung to the tune of "Oh My Darlin' Clementine." [See my rendition here.](#)

Sing, Dance, and Sign Along with Some Music:

*Play music that incorporates colors/signs for colors. I like to use the song, "[Do You Know the Colors of the Rainbow,](#)" from the [Signing Time Songs Volume 2 CD](#), but any song/music that incorporates some of the colors that you've featured in your story time will work. ([Click here](#) for a post all about music made for signers.)

*Invite kids and their grown-ups to get up and dance to the music and do the signs for the colors when they hear the words for colors in the lyrics (and when they see you signing).

*Bring out the colorful scarves if you want to add this to your dancing (though it's harder to sign along if you're waving a scarf around!)

Round Out the Remainder of Your Story Time by Adding Some Quieter/Listening Activities and Some Active/Movement Activities:

*Choose one or several of the options below to fit your participant age/attention span and program time available.

*In classroom or homeschool settings, these learning activities can be incorporated at different times during the day or even over several days.

*In library settings, different activities can be incorporated for different age groups of participants (i.e. All groups start with the basics above, but for the infant/toddler group, add another song or two and wrap it up; for the preschool group, add another story, some songs and/or music, and a game or a craft; for the school aged group, add a couple more stories, some songs and/or music, a game or two, some fun facts, and a craft).

Invite a Retelling of "See the Colors":

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*Retell "See the Colors" using a homemade felt board and felt pieces (I cut basic shapes out of colored felt to match the story, i.e. a round yellow sun, a strip of brown dirt, a blue bird, a pink flower, a red apple, etc.). I let the kids help me retell the story and/or add each new felt shape. To encourage signing, my rule is to be a helper, you have to be a signer!

Read and Sign Along with Additional Stories:

*Two good (and very familiar) stories for incorporating the color signs are:

[Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?](#) and [Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes](#).

Sing Songs:

NOTE: For any of these songs you can add props like hats, scarves, balls, blocks, etc. to help cement the color connection. I've listed a couple of examples where scarves or hats are explicitly used, but props can be incorporated into any of the songs.

*"If You Sign and You Know it, Show Me Red/Blue/Yellow, etc" sung to tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It." (i.e. "If you sign and you know, show me red. If you sign and you know it, show me red. If you sign and you know it, show me red. Really show it. If you sign and you know it, show me red.")

*"Do You Know the Sign For Blue?" sung to the tune of "London Bridge." (i.e. "Do you know the sign for blue, sign for blue, sign for blue? Do you know the sign for blue? Show me blue.")

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*"Find a Blue Scarf" sung to the tune of "Where is Thumbkin." Pass out colored scarves to participants, then sing and sign, "Find a blue scarf. Find a blue scarf." When the blue scarves have been "found," encourage participants to wave their "blue" scarf and sing the next portion of the verse, "I have blue. I have blue" (or "S/he has blue. S/he has blue." or "Sally has blue. Sally has blue.") Repeat this for several different rounds/colors based on the time/attention span available. This activity works well with infants/toddlers, too. The babies will enjoy the songs and the waving motion of the scarves, and the parents will learn the signs by singing and signing.



*"Where is the Red Hat?" sung to the tune of "The Farmer and the Dell." For this song, you'll need a bag full of colored hats. I sing and sign the beginning part of the verse for one of the colors I'm featuring, (i.e. "Where is the red hat? Where is the red hat?") then I fetch the related hat out of the bag and put it on my head and finish the verse ("Hi Ho the Derry O, I Found the Red Hat!"). Repeat this for several different colors based on time/attention span available. (An alternative that can be fun is to ask the children to close their eyes (they will peek...it's okay) and then "hide" the appropriate hat under a colorful blanket in the center of the circle. Preschoolers get an absolute thrill out of being able to anticipate and predict where the hat is "hidden" time and time again (and yes, I hide it in

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the same place each time--the kids can barely contain themselves by about the third time).

Play Signing Games:

*Have a colorful "cake walk." Set out a circle of colorful mats/carpet squares or other small props. Play music and instruct participants to move around the circle. When the music stops, each participant should stop near a colored mat or prop. Select a color that is represented in the circle and say (and/or show the sign for) that color. Anyone who is standing on/near that color (and who can make the correct sign for that color) wins a prize (or wins a chance to continue playing, while others sit out).



*Pass the colorful ball. I use a big ball I got at a science store in my hometown, but any colorful ball will do. Have participants sit in a circle. Start the ball moving around the circle by saying, "My name is ____ and I like the color ____" (using the color sign for the color word). Now, roll the ball to another player who says, "Thanks, _____. My name is _____, and I like the color _____," (again signing the color word). Play until everyone has had at least one chance, and/or until participants have learned each other's names.

*Sign Language Memory Game. Have participants stand in a circle. The first person begins by saying, "My name is ____ and I know the sign for the color ____" (using the color sign for the color word). The second person in the circle continues, "My name is ____ and I know the sign for the colors ____ and ____" (repeating the first color, and adding a new color, using the color signs for both). The third person continues, "My name is _____, and I know the sign for the colors _____, _____, and _____," (repeating the first two colors and adding a third, using the color signs for all of the color words), and so forth. A new round begins when

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someone cannot remember the string of colors in the right order.

*Sign Language Wiggle Buster: Have participants stand up. Call out for participants to engage in different movements based on the color of the clothing they are wearing. For example, "If your shirt is white, put your hand on your head." "If your shoes are brown, hop up and down three times." "If you are wearing anything black, spin in a circle." "If your pants are blue, sit down." Use the signs for the colors you refer to during the game. This is a great game to get the wiggles out.

NOTE: Instructions for a wide variety signing games are included in each book in the "Story Time with Signs & Rhymes" series. Instructions for "Create a Deck of Cards," "Play Go Fish," and "Guess the Mystery Person" are offered on page 31 of "See the Colors."

Fun Facts:

*There are fun facts about ASL included on page 30 in each "Story Time with Signs & Rhymes" book. Older kids particularly enjoy the fun facts, but even preschoolers, and the parents of infants/toddlers enjoy learning about ASL and/or Deaf Culture in addition to learning key signs.

*A fun fact I like to point out during the "colors" theme is that many of the signs for colors are signed using the handshape of the letter the color word begins with (i.e. the signs for blue and brown both use "B hand." The sign for yellow uses the "Y hand," and the sign for green uses the "G hand.")

Craft Activities:

*Just about any crafty project can work into the "colors" theme; even a simple coloring sheet. To tie into the sign language story time, just ask participants to show you or a partner the signs for the different colors they've incorporated into their artwork.

*One craft activity I really like to use for this theme is to encourage participants to make their own "See the Colors" book. Give each participant 4 sheets of paper. Stack the paper, and fold in half to make a "book" that will be 8 pages. Offer art supplies and instructions to create one color-themed illustration per page. Encourage participants to read and sign their book to a partner.

Free Play Activities:

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*Put out colorful blocks or balls and allow children to do what they do best; play. Encourage parents/caregivers to engage children with questions that invite the use of color signs in the conversation (i.e. "Will you hand me the red block?" "How many yellow balls can you find?")

Closing Song:

*I typically close each story time with a song that reviews the colors we've learned during the program. I usually sing this song AFTER I've given instructions for the craft and/or free play activities (if I have these elements planned for the program), but BEFORE I let participants transition to the craft and/or free play activities. I often sing the same song that I opened the program with (For example, "We Learned the Sign for Red/Blue/Green/Brown/Pink/Etc Today" to the tune of "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush," but any closing song that incorporates words/signs for the colors introduced in the book will work).

That wraps up this week's "Start to Finish Story Time." I hope this has been helpful, and I look forward to your input and ideas, which I will incorporate into future posts. If you are planning your own Sign Language Story Time event, be sure to check out [the great resources my publisher has developed](#) to help you plan your own event (scroll down past the Star Wars Event Info).

If you love the ideas I've shared, but would prefer that I deliver the Sign Language Story Time to your students or patrons, invite me to your school or library, or ask me about Skype visits!

Happy Signing! Dawn

End Sample Blog Post