

Deaf Santa's Guide to Interacting with a Deaf Child

Ho, Ho, Ho! Welcome, fellow Santas, Mrs. Clauses & Elves! As we spread the joy & magic of Christmas, it's important to ensure that every child feels included & cherished, especially our little deaf friends. This training will provide you with essential signs & phrases to communicate effectively with deaf children, making their experience as magical as possible. Remember, some of these children experience language deprivation, so we want to gently encourage parents to learn sign language if the opportunity arises.

Before we dive into learning the signs & phrases, let's discuss some important tips to keep in mind when signing with a child:

- Eye contact is crucial when communicating with deaf children. Maintain eye contact throughout the conversation to show that you're engaged & paying attention.
- Gestures can be an effective way to supplement your signing. Don't hesitate to use facial expressions & body language to convey your message.
- Physical touch, such as tapping on the arm or shoulder, can be a helpful way to get a child's attention or offer reassurance.
- We encourage you to learn the ABC's & numbers in your free time. That will allow you to fingerspell words that you do not know how to sign. And be able to read the deaf children fingerspell their names.

- Be prepared for the possibility that some deaf children may be disappointed to learn that Santa doesn't sign fluently. By knowing a few signs, you can validate their feelings & overcome their disappointment. Remember that Santa is warm, kind-hearted & approachable. Even if your signing skills are limited, your warm demeanor & genuine effort to communicate will help make the experience special for the child.
- Imagine a situation where a deaf child visits Santa with their hearing siblings. It's possible that you may have a fuller exchange with the hearing siblings simply because of the ease of communication. However, it's essential to make an extra effort to engage with the deaf child, even if it means using the limited signs you know. Compensate for the imbalance in communication by offering an extra hug or paying special attention to the deaf child. This simple gesture can create a memorable & cherished experience for them.
- In American Sign Language, the word order is different from the English language. Here is an example.

English: What is your name?

ASL: Your name what?

With these tips in mind, let's jingle all the way into our signing adventure!

Merry Christmas!
Nice to meet you!
What do you want for Christmas?
You're on the nice list!
You've grown so much!
Have you been good this year?
How's your family?
Do you have any pets?
I know a little sign language.
Sign that again please.
Smile / Camera
Thank you for visiting!
Teach me a new sign.
Let's see your wish list!
My elves are working hard!
ABC's / 1-10
Hello / Bye / ILY
How are you? Fine / Good / Wonderful / Excited
What is your name?
Deaf / Hard-of-Hearing
Santa / Elf / Reindeer / Rudolph / Sleigh
Are you ready for Christmas?
How many days until Christmas?
Cookies / Milk / Sleep / No Peeking
Boy / Girl / Mom / Dad / Family / Friend / Sister / Brother
Cat / Dog / Bird / Fish
School / What grade are you in?
Surprise / Gift / Toy / Car / Doll / Bike / Pokemon / VR / Clothes
Fire Place / Christmas Tree / Christmas Stocking
Yes / No / Thank You / You are Welcome / Slow Please / Again Please
Red / Orange / Yellow / Green / Blue / Purple / Pink
Black / White / Brown

Any other words or phrases you would like to learn how to sign?

Congratulations on completing your Deaf Santa training! You're now equipped with essential signs & phrases to make every child's visit to Santa's lap a magical experience. Always remember the importance of gently encouraging parents to learn sign language when the opportunity presents itself.

With your new skills, you'll bring joy & inclusion to deaf children & their families this Christmas season. By embracing & celebrating the diversity of communication, you'll help make the world a more magical place for everyone. Ho, Ho, Ho!