

“It is so worth it!”

“I feel like our family gained a new friend. Our tutor encouraged our questions and made us feel comfortable.”

Quotes from FSLP Families

If you...

- Have a deaf or hard of hearing child, between the ages of 0 and 3,
- Live in Massachusetts,
- And are currently receiving services through an Early Intervention Program.

...then you qualify for this!  
**FREE program!**

Contact us to sign up for the  
**Family Sign Language Program!**

E-mail us at [FSLP@necc.mass.edu](mailto:FSLP@necc.mass.edu)

“Embrace it and have fun with it!”

“Practice, practice, practice.”

“*You* are learning so that your *child* can communicate.”

Advice from FSLP Graduates

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REGIONAL CENTER  
EAST



## Massachusetts Family Sign Language Program

Creating Connections and  
Fostering Communication



Learning a language at a very early age provides the foundation for literacy skills that children will need throughout their lives. The earlier any child is exposed to and begins to learn language, the better that child's communication skills will become.

## American Sign Language (ASL):

- Is one of several communication options available to Deaf people
- Is a complete, complex, and nationally recognized three dimensional language
- Is fully accessible without sound
- Uses signs made of handshapes, movements, facial expressions, and body posture
- Is the fourth most commonly used language in the United States
- Is the first language of many Deaf North Americans



The Massachusetts Family Sign Language Program is coordinated by the Gallaudet University Regional Center at Northern Essex Community College through a contract with the Department of Public Health.

The goal of this program is to introduce families to American Sign Language—enabling them to communicate with their deaf or hard of hearing child at the earliest age possible.

Many families enrolled in the program explore multiple communication methods. We support the family's right to whichever methods most benefit and allow the child access to early language.

### Families receive:

- Convenient scheduling
- The opportunity to invite extended family members and caregivers to participate in classes
- 20 weeks of free in-home instruction specifically tailored to their needs

The first 10 weeks are provided in the family's home. The second 10 weeks may be in the home, online, or in a group setting with other families.

### Families learn:

- Vocabulary
- The application of ASL to everyday life
- Methods of making communications more visual and accessible for their child
- About the Deaf community
- About Deaf Culture



### Tutors:

- Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing adults from the family's community
- Are trained to recognize children's language and development needs
- Teach using the Gallaudet University Regional Center's Family Sign Language Program curriculum
- Use familiar objects in the child's natural environment as tools for teaching communication skills
- Serve as excellent cultural and linguistic role models for children and families

Tutors are assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. The wait time for a tutor will depend on the number of families waiting and the number of tutors in your area who match your schedule.