

# Key Word Sign

Key Word Sign (KWS) is a simplified form of signing. The signs used are from Auslan, and also include natural gesture, facial expression and body language.

- KWS is used with children who have little or no speech
- Only the key words of a sentence are signed
- The person speaks and signs at the same time
- KWS does not stop speech developing, but may help speech to develop.

## Who uses Key Word Sign?

Everyone!

All communication partners, including parents, carers, siblings, friends, therapists and educators can use KWS.

The child will learn to use KWS when he/she sees others using it - just like a child learning to talk hears people speaking around him/her.

Modelling (i.e. using) KWS with your child, and other people in your child's life, is essential.

## Why use Key Word Sign?

### KWS reduces frustration

- It's frustrating having something to say and no way of saying it.
- Frustration can lead to tantrums and other difficult behaviours.
- Having a way of communicating can reduce a lot of this frustration.

### KWS helps expression

- It gives your child a way to initiate interactions, make requests and comment on things that are happening.
- It encourages your child to use speech by helping him/her successfully communicate

- It helps your child learn about using language while speech is developing
- It gives a way of communicating in the absence of speech or when speech is not clear
- It can be a useful prompt to help develop communication skills, rather than telling your child what word to say.
- It helps others to understand your child's words.

### KWS helps to understand spoken words

- It gives a visual representation of spoken words (looks like the word it represents, e.g. ball).
- When using KWS, the child sees and hears the information.
- It gets a child's attention.
- Key word signs highlight key information
- The speaker naturally uses shorter sentences.
- It provides consistent vocabulary (sometimes we use different words that mean the same thing, but the sign will stay the same, e.g. biscuit/cookie, break time/play/recess)

## More information?

### Key Word Sign Australia website:

<https://www.scopeaust.org.au/services-for-individuals/specialised-communication-services/key-word-sign-australia/>

### Key Word Sign Victoria website:

<https://keywordsignvictoria.org/>

### Videos of conversations:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBoz41x5Y4V4hHvTqpzu7FA>

### Songs sung with KWS:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=key+word+sign+songs](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=key+word+sign+songs)