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Early Childhood Speech and Language Delays

Early Childhood Speech and Language Delays in Mexican Immigrant Families

Alicia Cobos

California State University Monterey Bay

Introduction

Speech and language delays in children can be challenging for parents, especially Mexican immigrant parents. There are several challenges for Mexican immigrant families. For example language barriers and challenges, challenges to their cultural beliefs, and the willingness and time to talk to specialists. When parents have not acquired certain helpful skills to work with speech and language delay; they are having a more difficult time communicating and meeting a child's needs. Most importantly, they don't know there are other forms of communication for example beginner sign language, and communication boards. Parents who acquire these skills are more prepared to understand how best to work with their children in order to help them make progress in their speech and language delays. In order to help Mexican immigrant parents support their children, I will conduct a parent workshop on July 29th. I will provide communication techniques, resources, and information on how to support their children with their speech and language delays. This workshop will be provided in Spanish for parents who have children attending Duncan Holbert School in Watsonville, California.

Needs Statement

Parenting children with speech and language delays can have challenges because they require a different approach to their education and everyday living. Parents could feel stress and fear because their children aren't communicating or voicing their needs. Some Mexican immigrant parents have not yet learned how to support their preschool-aged children with special needs, particularly speech and language delays. Some of the reasons for this lack of learning are because parents and child's educators have a language barrier and challenges, challenges to their cultural beliefs, and the willingness and time to talk to specialists. Consequently, parents and children are having difficulty communicating and understanding each other, and the children may not be making progress towards their speech and language skills. Parents may then not be capable of supporting their children in ways beneficial towards their child's speech and language progress. Therefore I will be providing a workshop for parents of children with speech and language delays. This workshop will inform them about speech and language delays, and it will help them learn a few techniques to support their children at home.

Children will develop at their rate, but there are ways to know if your child might be having signs of early speech and language delays. Language comes with many important factors: it is what we use to speak, understand and eventually helps us get what we want or share the ideas that we have (Asha, 2021). Some signs of early language delay are as follows: if the child is not putting words together by one in a half to two years of age, is having trouble playing or talking with other children, and if it is hard to understand even to his own family by the age of three (Asha, 2021). There are 1 in twelve children (7.7%)

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living in the United States, ages 3-17, with language, voice, or swallowing disorders (NIDCD, 2016). White children are more likely to have received early intervention services compared to Hispanic and black children. There were 60.1% of White children, 47.3% Hispanic children, and 45.8% of black children receiving these early intervention services (Black et al., 2012).

Early intervention is highly beneficial to children that have speech and language delays. Studies have found that the earlier the child receives speech and language therapy, the better the outcome for their speech, language, and communication skills (SLT, 2021). Acquiring the right services needed can help the children better meet their needs and have a successful academic trajectory. This is why parents play one of the most important roles, they are who determine if they bring their child into therapy. Parents also determine if they want to proceed with providing these interventions to the child. Therefore the connection and understanding between the speech and language therapists and the families are vital. Many parents do not understand why their children have speech and language delays and may feel guilty (Marshall et al., 2007). Having conversations with parents is essential, and giving them the right tools to help their children at home can have a parent feeling positive and more hands-on with their child's success.

Early childhood is the best time to build a foundation for their future development in social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs for lifelong learning and wellbeing. From the age of zero to five years old, children learn language from the adults and siblings surrounding them. When a child sends a message, this can look like a hand gesture, word, or sound; the parents' response and feedback are critical. The Response these parents give

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their children is the essential ingredient in the child's speech and language development and learning process (The Hanen Centre, 2016). This is why it is important that parents learn what signs a child with speech and language delay can look like and learn how to help their children with their communication and language development skills.

A few ways these parents can support their child at home; informing them so they can understand that speech and language look different for each child. Parents are learning about various interventions that they could do at home. Interacting with the child, using books, pictures, and other objects is part of the language intervention to help stimulate language development. Modeling correct sounds and syllables for the child will teach the child to make certain sounds. I will be teaching parents how to use five American Sign Language signs to be used with their children, making it easier for both child and parent to communicate faster. Children who have no words may get frustrated, have a hard time trying to engage socially, and may even throw temper tantrums (Soneson, 2021). It is always essential to use words at all times, even when using sign language. Five of the signs I will be teaching parents are those they can use daily, "more, all done, help, bathroom, and drink."

Parents will also learn about communication boards and how to use them. Communication boards are devices that have photos, illustrations, and symbols that help children who have speech and language delays. They are boards that help those with limited language skills to express themselves. Communication boards are a type of augmentative or alternative communication device (Stanborough, 2020). To use these, children will point at specific pictures on the handmade board I will provide, while parents

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will say out loud what the image is doing or what it is. The board they will be provided with will be used during the child's lunchtime. This board will help with easing communication between the child and the parent.

Parents are the key to having their children evaluated for the concerns they may have about their child. Parents' racial, ethnic, and cultural variations are the determinants of when and if the children receive these evaluations that may be needed. Some examples of these are the beliefs related to family cultural background compared to white parents, African-American and Latino parents views of when a child should reach their developmental milestones. Their views were also very different on parenting behaviors on the importance of talking and reading to their young children (Zucherman et al., 2013). Cultural beliefs and historical factors and mistreatment of minorities by health care and educational system can have parents feeling like there is little value in having their children being treated by providers (Zucherman et al., 2013).

Spanish-speaking Latinos from low social-economic status households are more than likely to have limited financial and limited resources and because of this those households that have children with speech and language delay are at higher risk for persistent delays (Magnuson & Duncan, 2002). Another reason why Latino children are being underdiagnosed is that they have been systematically excluded from research on early language interventions since historically most research has been done for English language speakers (Peredo et. al., 2020).

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Mexican immigrant families tend to appreciate more adult-directed and obedience from their children. These values within the culture differ from the middle-class European American families, it puts a strain on the application of language information programs. Since The language intervention program is unmodified to Latino families (Cycyk., & Iglesias, 2015). Some of their cultural perspective of these families is that they aren't concerned about their children's delays, nor do they believe their children exhibit communication disorders. When describing to them what the therapy routines consisted of, some felt like the therapists were just playing with their children (Lopez, 2007).

If the parents aren't understanding or having communication with the specialists, parents will not be able to learn what they can do in order to better support their child. The Spanish-speaking populations are growing, and research has shown that there is a lack of reliable screening instruments and that Speech and Language Pathologists who are not bilingual and are inexperienced with working with children who speak Spanish (Guiberson., & Rodriguez., 2010). This is another lack of tools for the parents to use with their children if specialists are not understanding the students as well.

Having an understanding of what typically developing language skills looks like in preschoolers will help educators and parents know if children may have a speech delay (Vincent. A., et al.). This means it's important for parents to be educated in such important information so they can see if there are concerns that might need to be addressed. A way that we could provide this information is by giving parents a guide on what ages and stages look like, of course, all this information should be provided in Spanish.

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Thinking about cultural appropriateness, being respectful because in many cases these parents believe that educators know best and they may have nothing to add to their child's education. We need to remember that Mexican immigrant parents will always benefit from frequent and personal forms of communication especially if it's in Spanish (Kumerer, S., 2012). These are the kinds of tools that will help these children with speech and language delay succeed. Supporting their parents to the fullest is the best way to approach this challenge.

My project will focus on cultural appropriation because it will be provided in Spanish. I will be giving a lesson where I will explain to Mexican immigrant parents who have children with speech and language delays what speech and language delays are. The signs they need to look for in order to know if their child might have speech and language delays. I will also teach them five ASL signs they could use with their children, and show them how it could benefit their child even if their child speaks a little or doesn't speak at all. Last, I will talk to them about communication boards and provide them with one, then show them how they could use it at home with their children. Children will be present in this event so parents can practice, and teach their children the different signs and the communication board during the lesson.

Theory

Lev Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist known for his sociocultural theory. He developed this theory in an explanation of ways that children have involved participants in the learning process. This theory exhibits the critical role that social interaction plays in learning and development. The sociocultural theory provides insight into ways for parents to guide their children. Vygotsky gave us an understanding of how abilities came about as the result of interactions between those who are least skilled and those who are more skilled members acting as tutors and mentors (Heath, 2018). The sole purpose of this viewpoint was to assist the least skilled member to gain knowledge and capabilities valued by their culture. Vygotsky's theory gives us a model of parent-child interactions. This theory also emphasizes the importance of parents and children working together in building the child's learning. Vygotsky's social interactionists theory compliments his sociocultural theory. Vygotsky believed that interaction between child and caregiver is mandatory in language acquisition, and modifying the language to suit the learner's capabilities is crucial to language acquisition.

The sociocultural theory relates to my project on Mexican immigrant families with children with speech and language delays. Vygotsky's theory displays the importance of the children's development depending on their social interactions. There will be parent-child communication training. This training will be responsive to this group's culture because it will be provided in Spanish. The training will be about the process of having verbal interactions between their child and parent using different tools of communication. The parent will need to follow my instructions but they will focus on

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guiding their child to do so, hence learning in the process ways to support their child with speech and language delays.

Consideration of Diversity

My project will be conducted at Duncan Holbert Preschool in Watsonville, California, the population of the city is 84.33% Hispanic, 10.93% White, 3.02% Asian, and .86% multirace (Census, 2010). Hispanics are the most common group to be living under the poverty line (Data, 2018). Between 2015-2019 there was 74.9% of the population speaking other languages other than English at home (Census, 2019). One of these languages is Spanish and this is why my project targets this population. Due to these statistics, I anticipate that it's more than likely that my participation will be from low-income. Since I decided to do my workshop in Spanish it is more than likely that I will have most of the participants that I anticipated because the population is mostly Hispanics.

My project was created for Mexican immigrant families who have children attending Duncan Holbert Preschool. These families have children who have speech and language delays. Since most parents speak Spanish, I plan to present my workshop in Spanish to them. Since all special education teachers are not proficient in Spanish I believe this will be an educational benefit for these Mexican immigrant parents. In order to do the workshop parents will need to be proficient in Spanish. This project could also be used for a diverse population, anyone that spoke English and has a child with speech and language delays. All the information provided for these parents could be used with any other population, the only difference would be that it would be provided in Spanish. This project will be responsive and sensitive not only because I will be providing the

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workshop in the language they feel most comfortable in but I will also be using terminology that they will understand and comprehend.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the project, participants will be able to...

- 1) Parents will be able to identify two signs of speech and language delay.
- 2) Parents will be able to use a communication board to support interaction during lunchtime.
- 3) Parents will be able to demonstrate five ASL signs to use with their children.

Method

Participants

The Project will take place at Duncan Holbert School in Watsonville, California. Where I have been working for the past eight years as an instructional assistant. Participants will be 10 Mexican immigrant parents who have children, 3-5-year-old attending this school, with speech and language delays. The Workshop will be intended for those parents whose primary language is Spanish. Participants will bring their children to the workshop in order to practice with them using what they will be taught during the lesson. They will practice five ASL signs and using a communication board.

Procedures and Materials

First, I will begin by letting the parents know that this is a project for school. I will give a brief explanation telling them why this project is important to me and that I am there to help them. I will explain what speech and language delay is and what it looks like. I will explain how limited language in a child can be difficult for the child, and explain what stage they should be at by their age. I will provide them a paper that shows the red flags to look for in a child with speech and language delays. I Will also provide them with what developmental milestones look like that they can take home (See Appendix A and B).

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Second, I will talk to them about communication boards, what they are and how they could use them. Even though communication boards help benefit those children who have limited expressive language they can benefit all children with speech and language delays. Even if the child has few words or no words it will benefit both, if the child has no words the child will gesture to the want or need on the board while the parent expressively says it. I will explain to them that communication boards help the child express their needs by pointing to the picture on the board. That they should always use language by saying what is on the picture when they are pointing at the picture. I will give them each one that could be used during meals. I will explain and model to them how they could use it with their child. After I will have them practice for five minutes with their children (See Appendix C).

Last, I will explain that speaking isn't the only form of communication. I will ask how they know what their child is saying. I will hear them explain the different ways they understand what their child is saying and how they came to understand them. Listen to the parents explain how they communicate with their children and how their children communicate and express their needs. After a few answers, I will begin telling them that sign language is another form of communication and can be used to help support their child, even if their child has some words. I will tell them that we will be learning five important signs that they can use with their child, "more, all done, bathroom, drink, and help". Inform them that the signs can facilitate communication with their children. I will show them the signs first, then I will ask them to practice the signs themselves after asking them to practice with their child. So they won't forget I will hand them a paper for

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them with these signs. I will also tell them that speaking along with the sign is also a benefit for the child's receptive and expressive language. I will also have coloring pages, playdoh, and fidgets for the children to use while I am giving information to parents.

Results Section

I could not execute my project due to COVID-19; therefore, I do not have a results section.

Discussion Section

I could not execute my project due to COVID-19; therefore, I do not have a discussion section.

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Appendices

Capstone powerpoint presentation.

Early Childhood Speech and Language Delays In Mexican Immigrant Families

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Introduction

- What is speech and language delay
- What does speech and language delay look like
- Importance of early intervention



Introduction Continued

- Why this project/topic
- Topic: Speech and language delays in Mexican Immigrant families
- Project: Will be conducting a workshop where I will be presenting in Spanish, informing/ demonstrating parents of other forms of communication they can use at home that will benefit their child with speech and language delays.



Needs

- Having the right tools they can use at home to support their child that are beneficial to their speech and language
- Understanding of what typically developing language skills looks like and what are some of the red flags



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Needs Statement

- Language barriers between educators and parents
- Challenges to their cultural beliefs
- Willingness and time to talk to the specialists



Theory

- Sociocultural Theory
- Lev Vygotsky developed this theory explaining how children are involved participants in the learning process
- Emphasizes the importance of parent child interactions



Learning Outcome

- Parents will be able to recognize three signs of speech and language delay in children
- Parents will be able to use a communication board
- Parents will be able to demonstrate five ASL signs that can be used with children



Participants

- Participants will be 10 Mexican immigrant parents and their children
- The children will be 3-5 year olds attending Duncan Holbert School with speech and language delays
- Workshop is for those parents whose primary language is Spanish



Procedures & Materials

Workshop for Parents

- One day workshop
- Will inform parents of what speech and language delays looks like, and the signs of speech and language delays in a child [will provide material with this information for them]
- Will provide communication board and information on why it's beneficial and how to use it
- Will show them five ASL signs that they can use with their child

Results & Discussion

I could not execute my project due to COVID-19; therefore, I do not have results or a discussion section.

Conclusion Statement

- There are challenges that come with parenting a child with speech and language delays, these challenges are more difficult for Mexican immigrant families
- Parents will always benefit from frequent and personal forms of communication especially if it's in Spanish
- Supporting parents and providing them with these skills is the best way to support their children with speech and language delays

Appendix A

Parent information on the red flags they could look for in a child that may have speech and language delays.

Speech and Language Development: Red Flags

Topic Overview

A child's failure to reach speech and language milestones as expected maybe a "red flag," or warning, meaning a speech and language development problem. If your child does not reach developmental milestones on schedule, it does not necessarily mean there is a problem. But he or she should be evaluated by a health professional.

Language delays include problems understanding what is heard or read (receptive language delays) or problems putting words together to form meaning (expressive language delays). Some children have both speech and language delays.

Red flags for a speech or language delay include:

- No babbling by 9 months.
- No first words by 15 months.
- No consistent words by 18 months.
- No word combinations by 24 months.
- Slowed or stagnant speech development.
- Problems understanding your child's speech at 24 months of age; strangers having problems understanding your child's speech by 36 months of age.
- Not showing an interest in communicating.

Also, talk to your health professional anytime you or another caregiver has concerns about your child's speech and language development or other problem that affects your child's speech or understanding of language, such as:

- Excessive drooling.
- Problems sucking, chewing, or swallowing.
- Problems with control and coordination of lips, tongue, and jaw.
- [Stuttering](#) causes a child embarrassment, frustration, or difficulty with peers.
- Poor memory skills by the time your child reaches kindergarten age (5 to 6 years). He or she may have difficulty learning colors, numbers, shapes, or the alphabet.

Other red flags include:

- Failure to respond normally, such as not responding when spoken to. This may include signs that the child does not hear well, such as not reacting to loud noises.

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- **A sudden loss of speech and language skills. Loss of abilities at any age should be addressed immediately.**
- **Not speaking clearly or well by age 3.**

Appendix B

The sheet of paper of what developmental milestones look like in typically developing children.

LANGUAGE AND SPEECH

Developmental Milestones

1 child's communication skills develop rapidly during the first years of life. The following are language and speech milestones that most children experience. However, every child's development is unique, and non-mastery of any one item within an age range does not necessarily signify the presence of a language or speech disorder.

- BIRTH - 3 MOS**
 - Responds to Environmental sounds
 - Recognizes familiar voices
 - Smiles at familiar people
 - Coos/goos when happy
 - Distinct crying for different situations
- 4 - 6 MOS**
 - Looks in the direction of sounds
 - Responds to tone of voice
 - Babbles with many different sounds (including p, b, and m)
 - Laughs and Gurgles
 - Expresses excitement and displeasure
- 7 MOS - 1 YEAR**
 - Turns & looks in direction of sounds
 - Listens to others' speech
 - Recognizes common words
 - Responds to simple requests
 - Variegated babbling
 - Gains attention without crying
 - Uses gestures and imitates speech sounds
 - Uses 1 to 2 words
- 1 - 2 YEARS**
 - Points to body parts when asked
 - Follows simple directions
 - Understands simple questions
 - Vocabulary increases every month
 - Uses 1- and 2- word questions
 - Puts two words together
 - Uses many different consonant sounds
- 2 - 3 YEARS**
 - Understands simple opposites (up/down, stop/go, etc)
 - Follows 2-step directions
 - Listens to stories
 - Uses 2-3 word phrases
 - Speech is usually understood by familiar listeners
 - Names objects
 - Asks "why?"
 - May stutter on words and sounds
- 3 - 4 YEARS**
 - Uses 3-4 word sentences
 - Understands family words
 - Talks about events/activities that happened away from home
 - Speech is mostly understandable
 - Answers simple wh- questions
 - Asks "when" and "how" questions
 - Understands basic shapes and colors
 - Uses pronouns and some plurals
 - Speaks without stuttering
- 4 - 5 YEARS**
 - Understands sequencing and time words
 - Follows complex instructions
 - Hears and understands most of what is said to and around them
 - Produces all speech sounds, but may make intermittent errors on l, s, r, v, z, ch, sh, and/or th
 - Names letters and numbers
 - Tells short stories and maintains conversations
 - Can adapt speech to listener

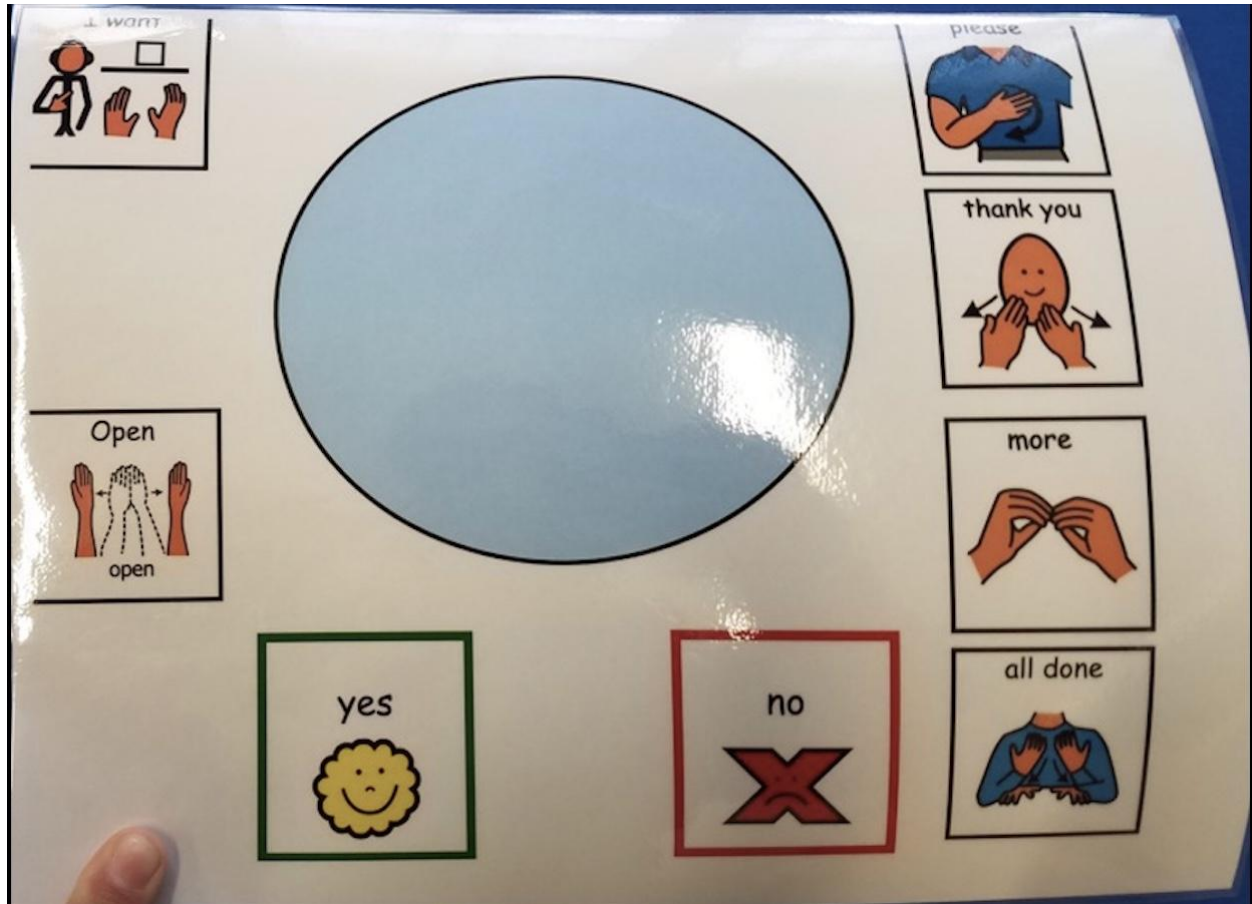
Questions/concerns? Contact us,
Beacon Therapy LLC
Guiding You to Better Communication
www.beacontherapyllc.com
(228) 254-7716

Adapted from information provided by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart.htm>

Appendix C

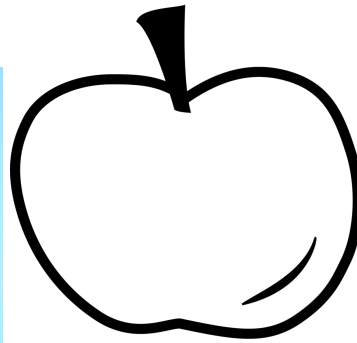
The communication board will be provided for the parents.

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Other materials used during the presentation fidget toys, playdoh, colors and coloring pages.

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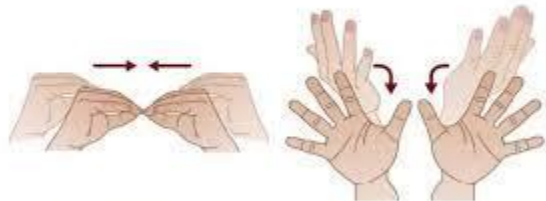
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This is the worksheet they will have with the ASL signs they will be practicing: bathroom, more, all done, help and drink.

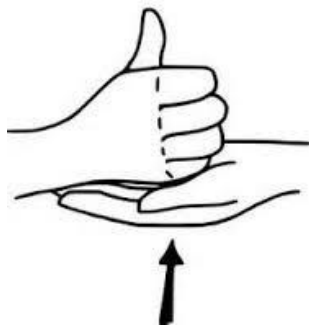


MORE, ALL DONE



Jeff Lehman MT-BC Archtop Music Therapy

help



drink