

What is Key Word Sign?

Key Word Sign is the use of manual signs and natural gesture to support communication. Key word sign is used to encourage and support language development in children and adults with communication difficulties.

Key word signing uses a core vocabulary of specially selected words that comprises concepts and ideas considered to be the most appropriate for children and adults with communication and language difficulties.

Each word (concept) is matched to a hand sign. Key word signing uses **Auslan signs**. **Auslan** is the native language of the Australian deaf community (**Australian Sign Language**).

The main features of Key Word Sign include

- Use sign and speech concurrently
- Sign the key words but say the whole sentence
- Use visual strategies like body language, facial expression and directionality
- Use symbols where appropriate
- Some use of finger spelling.

Note:

In Australia, Key Word Sign was formerly known as Makaton. Key Word Sign continues to support children and adults with communication and language difficulties. It also continues to provide quality resources to families, carers and professionals.

In 2010, the Australian community of expert Key Word Sign presenters and users also reviewed the vocabulary. Key Word Sign in Australia is based on Australian vocabulary and international current best practice.