



Signing Time PTPA Summer Winner

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by [Leanne](#)

From an extremely early age, my daughter has been trying desperately to speak her mind. When we saw that at 9 months she was going to end up creating her own sign language if we didn't step in, hubby and I decided it was time to break out the college American Sign Language textbooks and see what we could teach her. It took a few tries of signing simple signs like "more" and "thank you" before she really got what the meaning was, but after that she would nod "yes" whenever we would ask her something with those simple signs.

It was at almost exactly one year, though, that she looked at us and just as plain as could be signed "more" right to us. Of course, we cheered for about thirty minutes straight and then decided we needed to introduce even more signs to her. A week or so later she signed "thank you" and then "all done" and from that time she has added almost 30 signs to her list of frequently used words, and is even stringing up to 3 signs together at a time. Now, at 18 months, she signs, speaks and communicates better than I had ever hoped, and is a much happier toddler now that she can use words and signs instead of squeals and grunts to get her opinions known.

Unfortunately, I found that I have purged a good portion of the signs I learned in college, and the signs I do remember aren't really anything a toddler can use in their day-to-day, so we have found ourselves searching online for new signs to teach her. So, of course I was thrilled when I heard that on December 9th, [Nick Jr.](#) was going to be premiering a new music series called *Signing Time* to teach sign language to preschoolers.



Since my daughter doesn't watch a lot of television, I actually had no idea that [Nick Jr.](#) is a 24-hour commercial-free educational network for preschoolers, and had no idea how many great shows they have for young kids – at any hour. But, my daughter does watch Yo Gabba Gabba on DVR so she can get her groove on, and just the other day we caught one of the [Signing Time music videos on Nick Jr.](#) and I watched as my daughter stopped in her tracks and sat glued to the screen during the video.

We were sent a screener for the [Signing Time music videos](#) and it had the same effect on all of us. We all sat as a family and grooved to the original and insanely catchy tunes sung and signed by Rachel Coleman. I was actually supposed to be writing a review at the time, and was sitting at my computer with my hands on the keyboard when hubby turned on the DVD, but found that *Signing Time* and my snuggling family was too hard to resist. In a span of just 5 songs, I learned (or remembered, in some cases) a whole bunch of signs that not only were extremely practical to teach our daughter, but also were so fun that repeating them left us all laughing even after the video had stopped.

That very next day we all had three new signs that we added to our list of frequently used items, and couldn't wait to watch the videos again to learn more. The brilliance of the [Signing Time videos](#) is not just that it's sign language, it's that it is aimed at teaching really young kids sign in the most fun and easy way possible. We all know that kids love songs with hand motions, so teaching them songs in sign language is really just the next step – and something that they can use as a skill forever.

In addition to some really cute and catchy tunes, [Signing Time](#) does have some really cool learning properties to help kids understand and emulate the signs they see on T.V. For one, all of Rachel Coleman's fingers have a colorful band just below the finger tips, which makes it easier to see and process the signs, even when they are done fast (which most of them are – they have to keep up with the beat!). The music videos are also impossible to turn away from, which I think is in a large part due to the fact that you just don't want to look away for fear you might miss something. Pair that with the cute images and videos of kids signing to the music and you've got an irresistible combination for kiddos.

Signing Time can be seen on Nick Jr. T.V. as well as on www.nickjr.com

A bit of background from about Signing Time: Coleman co-created Signing Time as a means to teach children to communicate using American Sign Language (ASL). As the mother of a daughter who is deaf, and another daughter with both cerebral palsy and spina bifida, sign language has played a central role in their family. Coleman has spent the last seven years making sign language fun and accessible for all children through the Signing

Time series, which includes award-winning DVDs, music CDs, books, flashcards and a former public television show. Coleman, who is also a singer and songwriter, has written all the original songs featured in the series. In 2008 Rachel was nominated for an Emmy in the category of Outstanding Performer in a Children's Series.

After viewing the Signing Time screener, I am so excited to check out the PTPA Award Winning Signing Time Parent Success Kit and see what other ideas and tips they have for parents teaching young kids to sign. I, for one, am planning on continuing to sign well into the preschool years and beyond and could use all the help I can get in giving our family new words and phrases to learn that help us describe and respond to all the different aspects of our lives.

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About Leanne Heilman



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As a busy wife, mom and executive, I'm fighting a constant battle to maximize the time I'm given each day. I am always looking for products that make life with kids easier, safer, or just plain more fun! As the founder and editor of Rave and Review, a Seattle-based review site that showcases new and established children and family items that are family tested with the highest standards, I work hard to find the best products for every family. Rave and Review's mother/father review team covers everything from baby and beyond and anything that encourages time spent as a family. I hope you will stop by and introduce yourself and explore the site a bit!

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