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## Introduction: An Important Message

*Sign Language Fun in the Early Childhood Classroom* is an educational resource designed for **ALL** early childhood classrooms and is to be used by **ALL** teachers, care providers, and parents of **ALL** young children: hearing, hearing-impaired, deaf, children with special needs, gifted children, children with communication disorders, and children who are new to our country and are just learning to speak English (ELL). Teachers and parents **DO NOT** need any previous knowledge or experience with American Sign Language (ASL) to successfully use this book.

### **Sign Language Fun in the Early Childhood Classroom provides you with:**

1. Information (based on research) about why American Sign Language is an effective early childhood teaching strategy that can:
  - accelerate verbal communication;
  - increase English vocabulary, attentional abilities, visual discrimination, and spatial memory; and,
  - can enhance early reading skills, such as comprehension, sight word recognition, phonemic awareness, phonetic and spelling skills.
2. Easy-to-use thematic teaching units, complete with teaching suggestions, games, activities, songs, rhymes, recommended children's literature, and reproducible illustrated sign language cards to get you started **learning** and **teaching** ASL to your eager young learners!