



because babies have so much to say

**Press Release- launch date Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

**SIGNS GIVE BABIES A HELPING HAND!**  
***American scientists prove that gestures help early speech.***

**25<sup>th</sup> February 2009** - New research from Meredith L. Rowe and Susan Goldin-Meadow, of the University of Chicago, published in 'Science' Journal, has established that babies who use gestures to communicate, at an early age, have large spoken vocabularies compared to their non-gesturing peers by the time they reach school age.

TinyTalk, the UK's favourite baby signing classes since 2002, has always known that the use of signs, or gestures, can significantly enhance the communication skills of young babies. The signs enable the children to let their carers know what they need, what they want and what they are feeling or thinking about.

"Babies have so much to say- even before they can talk. Babies who sign, usually learn to speak much more quickly and more clearly than babies who don't," says Katie Mayne, founder of TinyTalk, an ex-primary school teacher and a mother of two. "Signs are like 'pictures' for babies, helping them to understand what is being said to them. The signs also help the children to express themselves much earlier too. Their communication attempts promote growing self- confidence and self- esteem- which, in turn, leads to further communication! Importantly, through signing, children also make early attempts at speech."

Dr Gwyneth Doherty-Sneddon of the Department of Psychology at Stirling University said, "This research is in accord with a substantial body of research showing that gestures and spoken language are closely linked. Good



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communication in the early years is central to child development and later school attainment. The results would be suggestive that interventions encouraging the use of gesture in infancy and toddlerhood, may well be beneficial, particularly with children 'at risk' of poorer communicative development.”

TinyTalk offers baby signing classes right across the UK and Ireland and is seeing a significant increase in demand. More and more families are seeking to experience the benefits of early communication with their little ones. Mayne explains, “Contrary to popular belief, sign language *encourages spoken language* rather than hindering it. Even tantrums are reduced! Signing babies are happy babies, able to understand and be understood- and happy babies mean happy carers! Families who attend our classes tell us that their babies and toddlers are little chatterboxes, full of things to say!”

In the Ministerial Foreword to “Better Communication”, the Government’s action plan to improve services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, Ed Balls, MP and Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, and Alan Johnson, MP and Secretary of State for Health state, “Speech, language and communication are crucial to every child’s ability to access and get the most out of education and life.” They continue, “Creating an environment in which every child develops effective speech, language and communication skills....is a challenge for everyone working with children and young people, from speech and language therapists....to parents.”

So, at a time when serious concerns are being raised about the low level of communication skills of children entering pre-school, TinyTalk baby signing classes are top of their class! Through them, thousands of families across the UK are being offered the chance to give their babies a communication head start: a strong foundation for a lifetime of language development.



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To join them or for more information about the classes, visit the TinyTalk website:  
[www.tinytalk.co.uk](http://www.tinytalk.co.uk) or ring 01483 301444.

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## **Notes for Editors**

### **About TinyTalk**

TinyTalk delivers baby signing classes and training programmes, helping babies to communicate before they can talk.

Founded in 2002 by Katie Mayne, mum of two, primary school teacher and teacher of the deaf, TinyTalk has gone from strength to strength and continues to do so, bringing fun and enjoyment to baby signing. Following an appearance on ITV's 'This Morning', TinyTalk introduced baby signing to the nation and, in just six years, has grown to 125 teachers in the UK teaching over 6000 families in over 400 classes per week. In 2007 TinyTalk went international with TinyTalk classes also being delivered in Ireland and the United Arab Emirates and with TinySign classes in Australia and New Zealand.

TinyTalk classes provide entertainment in an educational and fun setting for both babies and their carers. Learning can continue at home through the TinyTalk Signing Pack, CDs and interactive DVD. The TinyTalk Baby Signing DVD and Baby Signing Pack both won the coveted Silver Award in the 2006 Practical Pre-School Awards. TinyTalk uses BSL (British Sign Language) as its sign language of choice, enabling families to communicate with the UK's deaf community.

May 2005 saw the publication of Amazing Baby 'Baby Signing', the ultimate simple-to-use baby signing book, written by Katie Mayne and published as part of the award-winning Amazing Baby book series by Templar Publishing. An appearance on BBC Breakfast News followed.

In 2007 Katie was a top finalist at the Prowess 'Inspirational Business Mum of the Year 2007' Awards (sponsored by Yellow Pages) and received a 'Highly Commended Special Award' as Top Finalist.



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2008 saw TinyTalk working with Bookstart in the production of the Bookshine pack which offers free books and information specifically designed to suit deaf children's needs.

TinyTalk is a supporter of I CAN, The Charity That Helps Children Communicate and in February 2009 appeared, with them, on the BBC Politics Show to discuss Early Years communication.

TinyTalk has also established an extensive Organisational Training Programme for nurseries and other childcare settings so that childcarers can incorporate signing as part of their daily practice. The programmes have been rolled out across national nursery chains and other high profile organisations, such as Center Parcs and Harrods.

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