

## Makaton

### What is it?

Makaton is a language programme that uses speech, signs and symbols to support language development. Makaton signs are made with your hands and used alongside your spoken language to provide visual clues about what you are saying. It is used in familiar children's TV programmes such as 'Something Special'.

Children naturally develop their use of gesture before they use their first words. Makaton signing builds on this pattern of development and gives children another way to communicate if they are not yet able to use their spoken language effectively.

Makaton signing does not replace spoken language and there is lots of evidence that it supports children's spoken language development. Using Makaton signing with your child has also been shown to support the development of attention and listening skills, understanding of language, memory, recall and organisation of language.

Makaton signing can support all children's language and communication development at home, preschool, school, and beyond. Makaton can be especially useful for children with communication difficulties as it can help to reduce frustration for children who are not yet able to communicate clearly using speech.

### How to use them?

- Say and sign the word at the same time.
- Use the sign every time you say the word.
- Repeat the word and sign lots and lots, e.g. "here's your drink. Here's mummy's drink. Mmm, nice drink."
- Use the word and sign in lots of different situations, e.g. Use "more" at meal-times, playing with different toys, at bath-time, etc.
- Respond to any attempt your child makes at signing. Don't correct their signs, but respond positively to the attempt, and repeat the sign for them, e.g. "yes, a drink".
- Add more signs, one or two at a time, following your child's interest.

### Top tips for success-

- Use signs and symbols as much and as often as you can.
- Always speak as you sign. Makaton signing should not be used to replace speech.
- Try to be face to face with your child so they can see your hands and face while you sign.

### Outstanding care for all

Chair: Margaret Schwarz. Chief executive: Debbie Richards  
Head office: Carew House, Beacon Technology Park, Dunmere Road, Bodmin, PL31 2QN  
Call us on 01208 834 600 | Visit our website at [cornwallft.nhs.uk](http://cornwallft.nhs.uk)



Great care

Great organisation

Great people

Great partner

- Only use a few signs and symbols at the beginning, choose the ones that are most important to the child and gradually introduce new ones over time.

**Further training / information –**

<https://makaton.org/>

<https://singinghands.co.uk/about/what-is-makaton/>

[Learn Makaton - TALKmoreCORNWALL CIC](#)

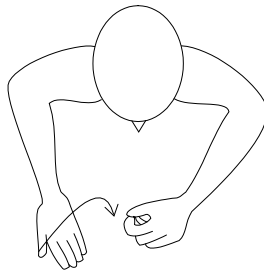
<https://www.cdssg.org.uk/speech-language-communication-skills/>

**Links for videos-**

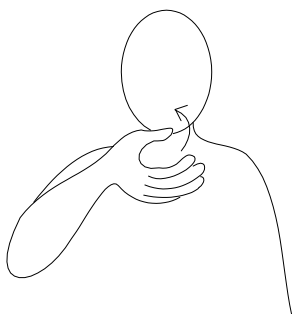
<https://www.youtube.com/user/makatoncharity/featured>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKVXkfPQceP9thH1k8FRZsg>

**Useful signs to introduce first:**



more



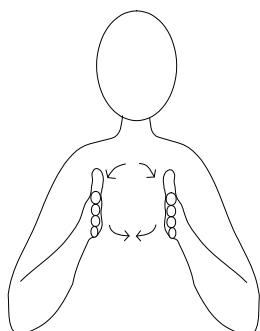
drink



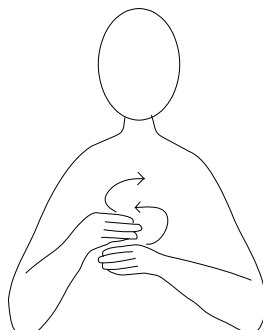
food

**Further signs**

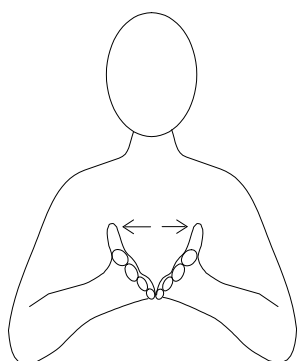
**Toys**



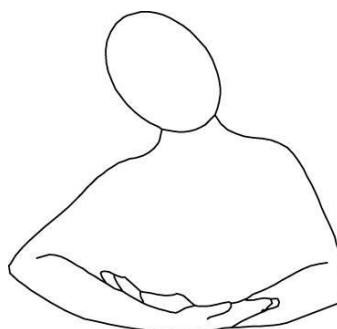
**ball**



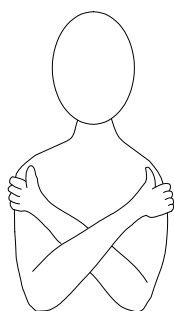
**bricks**



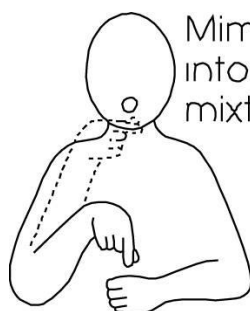
**book**



**doll**

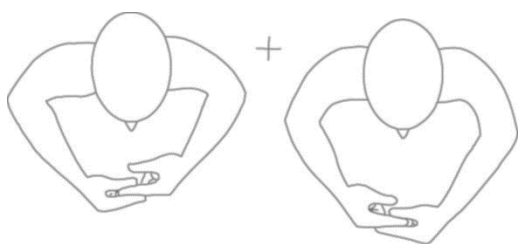


**teddy**



Mime dipping stick into pot of bubble mixture and blowing

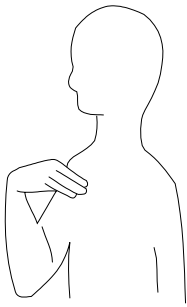
**bubbles**



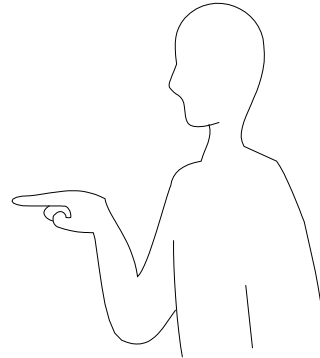
Mime placing pieces together

**Puzzle**

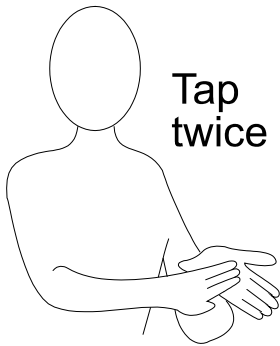
## People



me

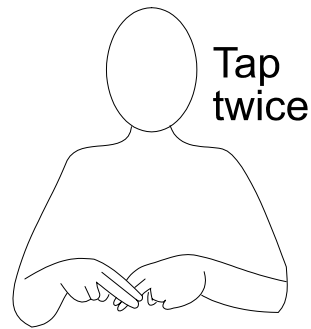


you



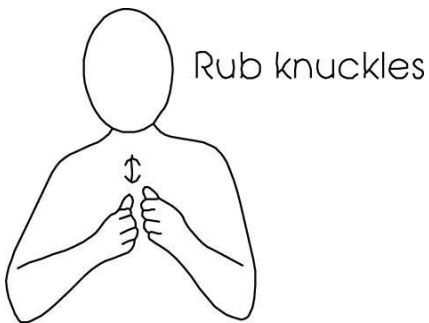
Tap  
twice

mum



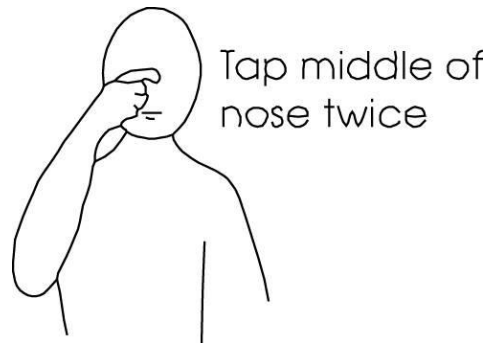
Tap  
twice

dad



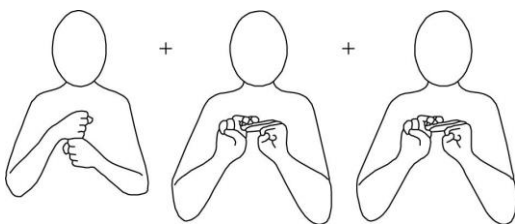
Rub knuckles

brother

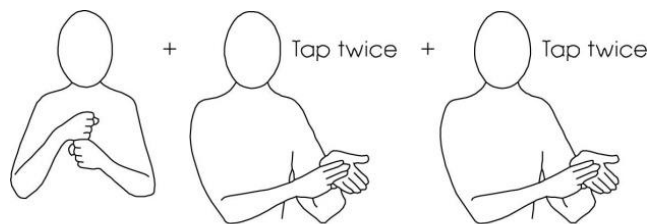


Tap middle of  
nose twice

sister

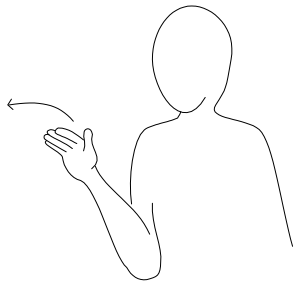


Finger spell 'G' plus 'F' plus 'F'  
Grandfather/grandad

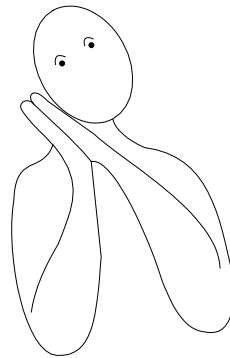


Finger spell 'G' plus 'M' plus 'M'  
grandmother/grandma

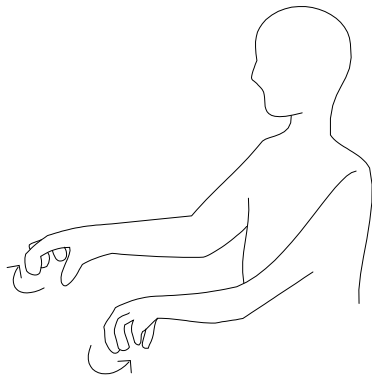
## The home



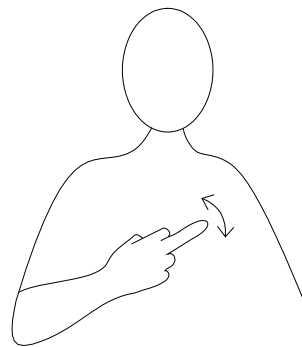
home



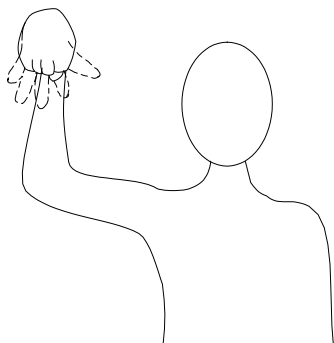
bed



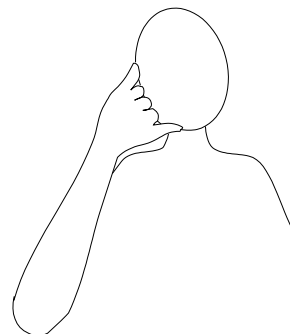
bath



toilet

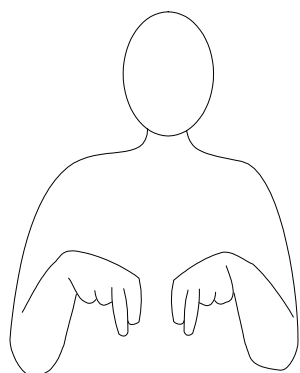


lamp

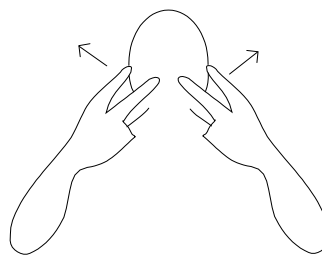


telephone

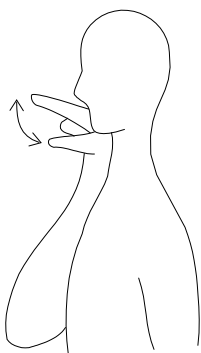
## Animals (pets)



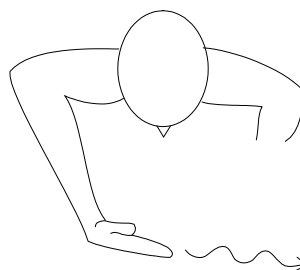
dog



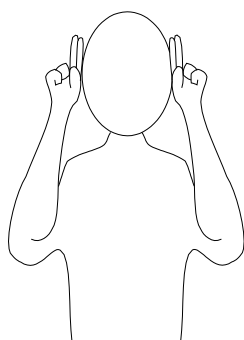
cat



bird

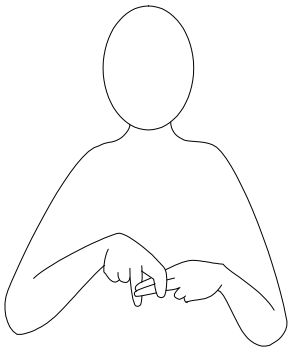


fish

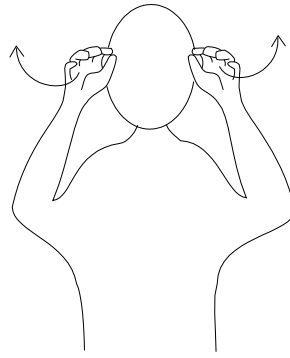


rabbit

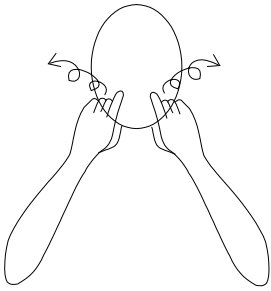
## Animals (Farm)



horse



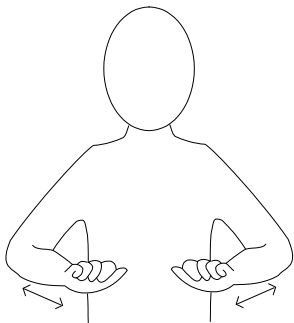
cow



sheep

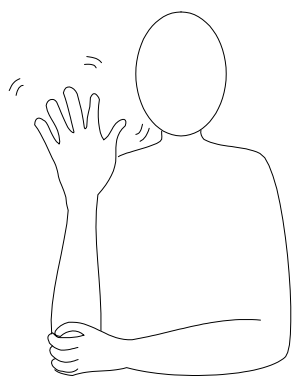


pig



chicken

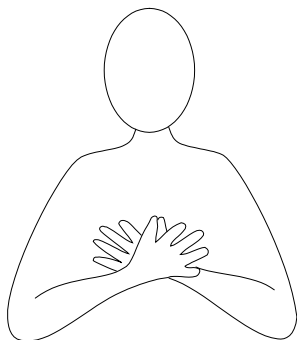
## Outdoors



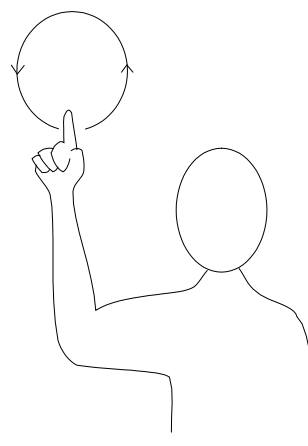
tree



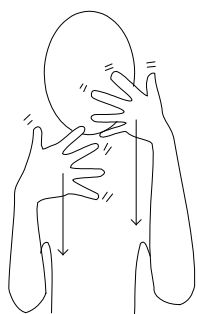
flower



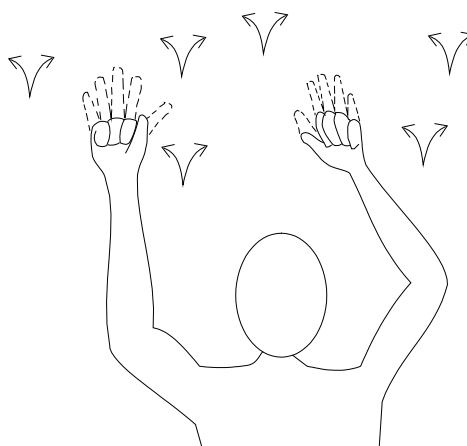
butterfly



sun

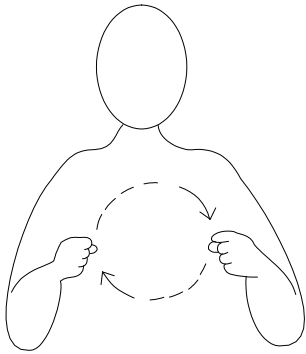


rain

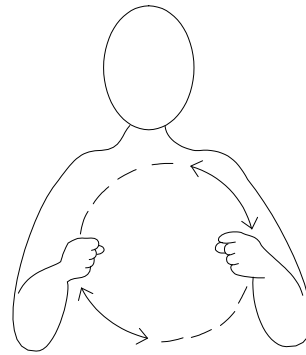


stars

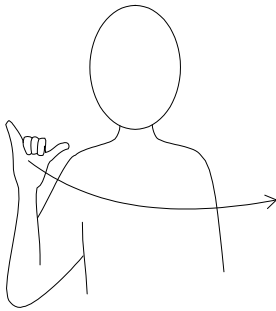
# Transport



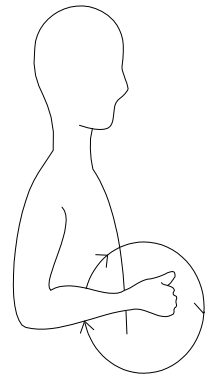
car



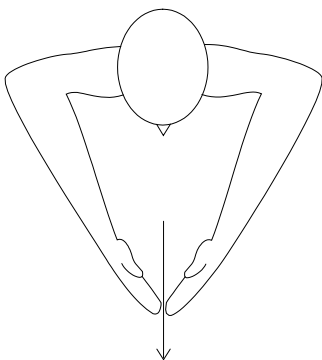
bus



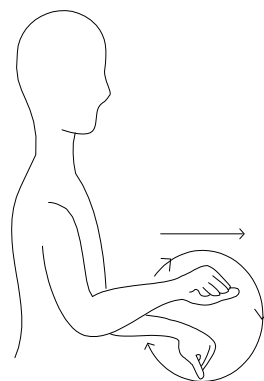
aeroplane



train

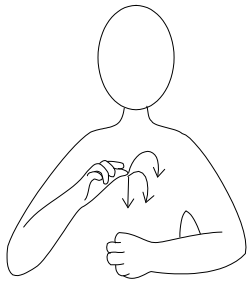


boat



bike

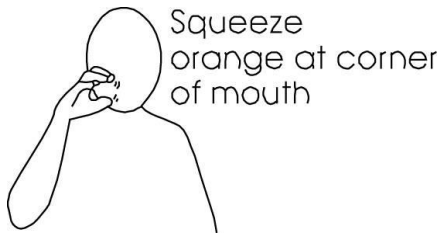
## Food & Drink



banana

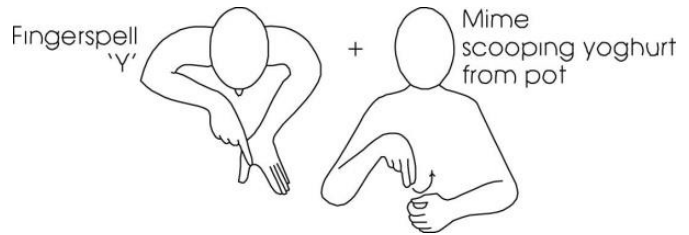


apple



Squeeze orange at corner of mouth

orange



Fingerspell 'y'

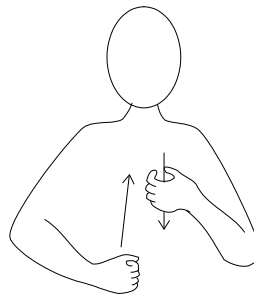
+ Mime scooping yoghurt from pot

yoghurt

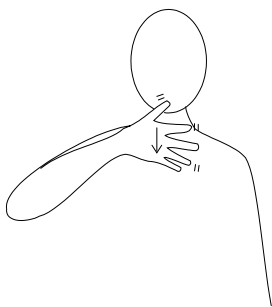


Tap twice

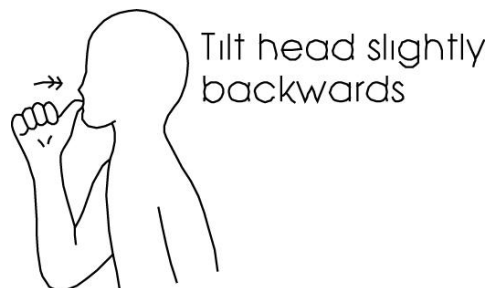
biscuit



milk

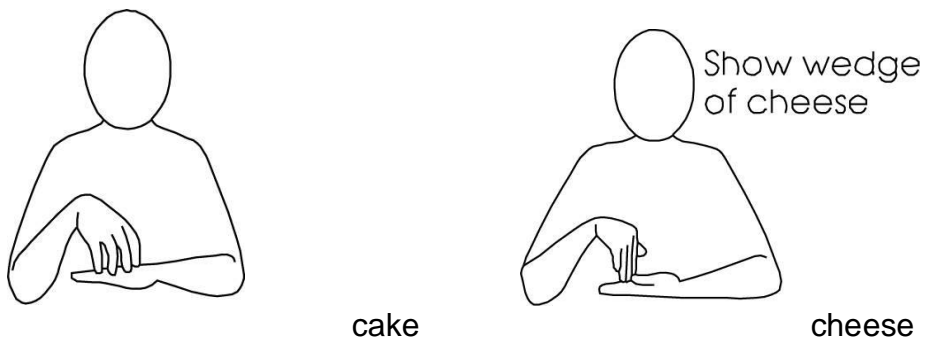
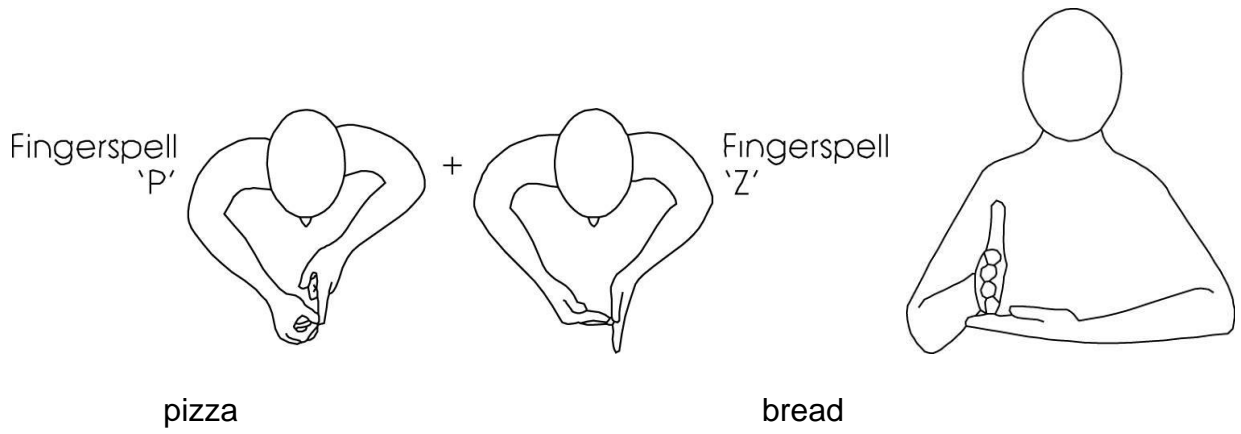
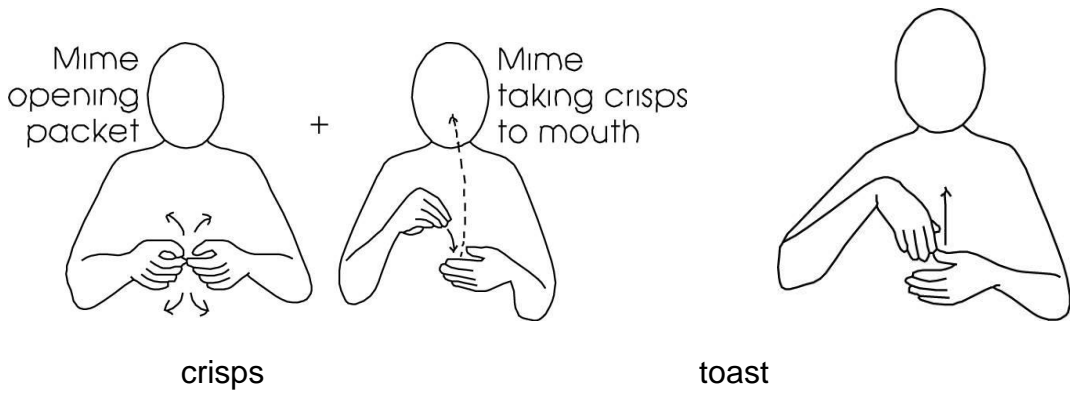


juice

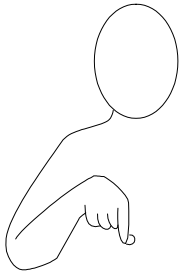


Tilt head slightly backwards

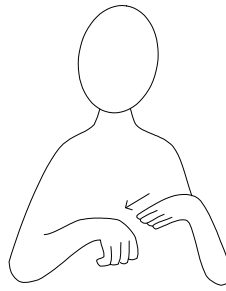
water



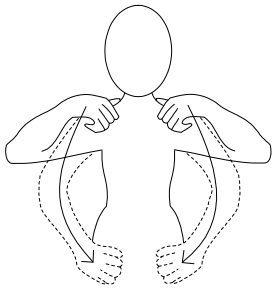
## Clothes



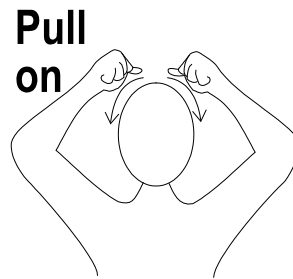
sock



shoe

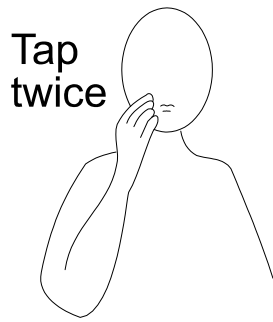


coat

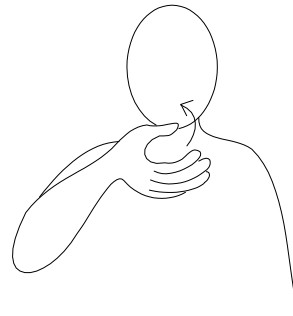


hat

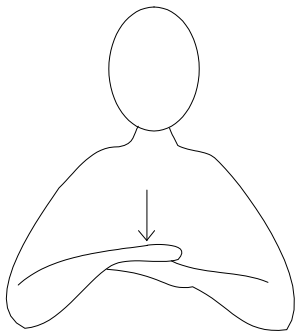
## Action Words



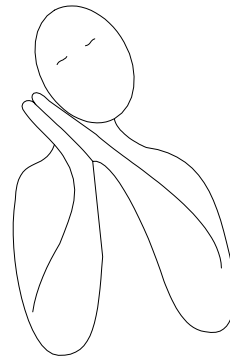
eat



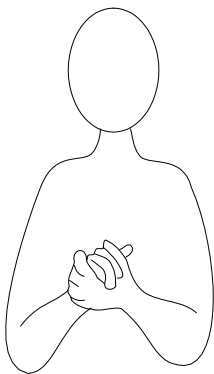
drink



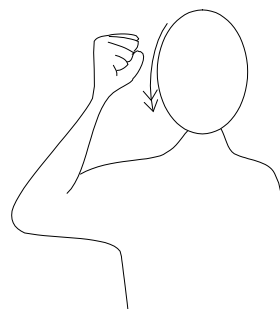
sit down



sleep

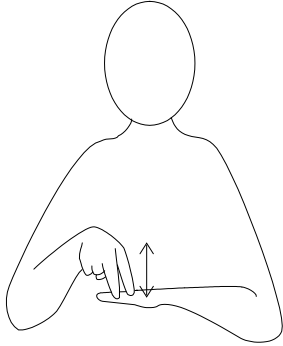


wash

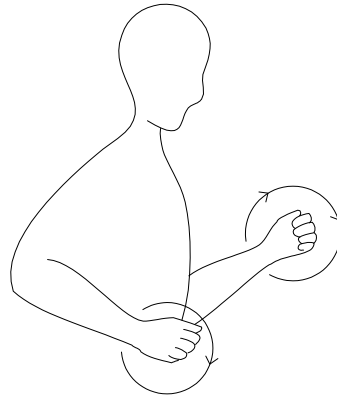


brush

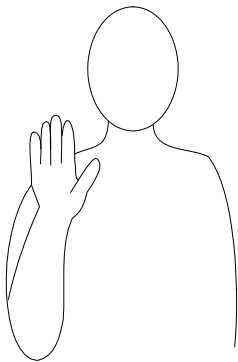
## More Action Words



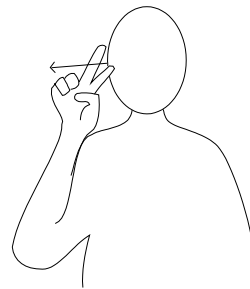
jump



run



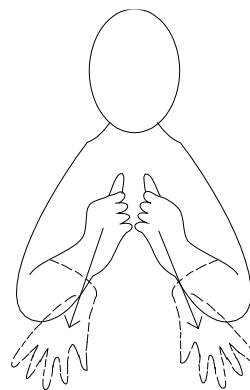
stop



look

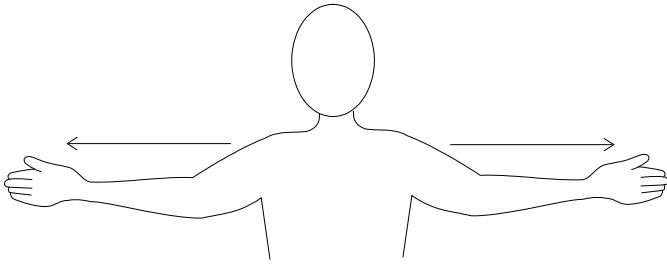


listen

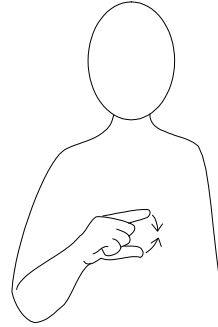


finish

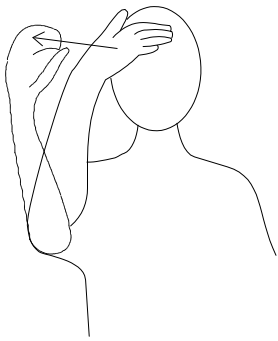
## Describing Words



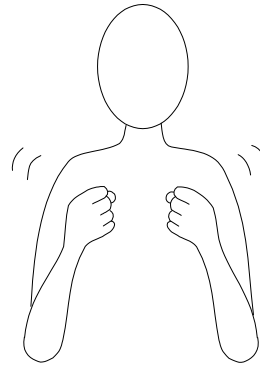
big



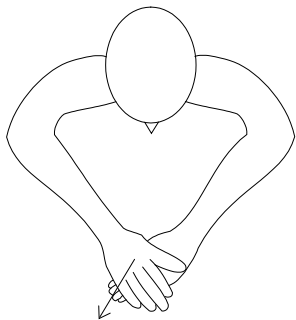
little



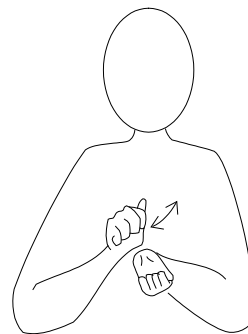
hot



cold

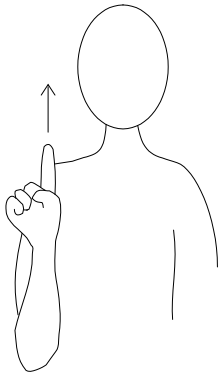


clean

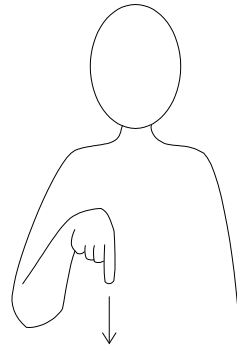


dirty

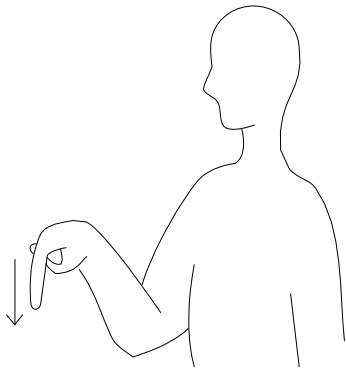
## Position Words



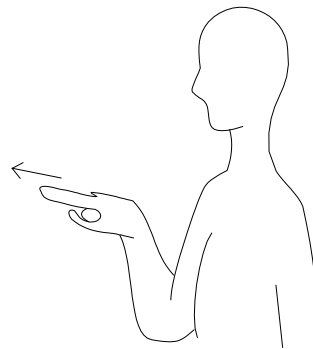
up



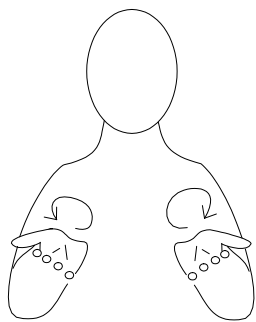
down



here



there



where?