American Sign Language Blocks

(Deaf/Hard of Hearing Kit – EC COE)

Description:	Image:
These 1.75-inch cubes made from basswood and printed with safe to touch inks are designed for those who want to learn or use American Sign Language to communicate. Practice ASL fingerspelling with these stackable blocks. There are two debossed sides on every block of this 28-block set which features the alphabet plus two additional letters: “a” and “o”. One sign language symbol and its corresponding alphabet letter symbol are featured on each block. One of the debossed sides is paired with its font equivalent. Note: Learning the American Sign Language (ASL) alphabet, also known as fingerspelling, involves memorizing the handshapes for each letter of the alphabet. It's a foundational skill for ASL communication, enabling users to spell out words and names that don't have a specific sign.	 Purchasing Information

Who Might Benefit?

Those who…

- Are deaf or hard of hearing and need early exposure to ASL.
- Have other disabilities that may make spoken communication challenging and may instead use ASL to support communication.
- Need additional help understanding the connection between letters, words, and communication systems.
- Have adequate fine motor skills to reach, grip, and release blocks, and use their hands to imitate ASL signs.
- Need to develop grip and finger dexterity to form ASL letters and words and/or use other learning materials such as writing tools.
- Are working on using both hands to complete an activity.

Why Use?

Provides an opportunity to…

- Establish a connection between ASL and print letters.
- Promote general language development and ASL.
- Develop fine motor skills by stacking blocks and practicing sign language.
- Increase awareness of letters of the alphabet.
- Play as they learn.

Instructions for Use:	Adaptation Ideas:
Environmental Considerations • American Sign Language Learning Blocks can be used in most any environment, such as community, home, school, etc., due to their easy portability (small size and weight). Positioning • American Sign Language Learning Blocks would work best when played with on a flat surface where the blocks could be manipulated and stacked. • A child could play with the blocks sitting at a table or on the floor, standing, or in a prone (lying on belly) position. Basic Play/Use • Open-ended exploration. • Arrange blocks on a flat surface. When the child picks up a block, point to the letter on the block, name it, and sign the letter. Point to the picture of the sign language symbol and encourage the child to sign the letter. If the child needs more support, sign the letter again, and physically help the child form the sign if necessary. • Use blocks like flashcards, showing each block separately, finger spelling the letter displayed on the blocks, and asking the child to sign the letter.	Optional Additional Materials/Supplies • Duct tape Stabilize It • Blocks could be towered against a wall or other vertical background to stabilize stacked blocks. Simplify It • The number of blocks presented to the child at one time can be limited initially and increased over time. Contain it • Blocks can be put in a tray to keep them in a confined area. Work mats or colored painters' tape can also be used to visually define spaces where the blocks can be used. Communication Support • Guide block selections with pointing; use vocabulary such as “pick up”, “put on”, “find (insert names of letters)”. • Consider visuals to accompany block building activities. • Consider using/modeling towering blocks using a communication board if appropriate to the child’s needs (does not have the manual dexterity for ASL consistently or needs visual cues to communicate). Add Sensory Cues • Blocks could be displayed on a high contrast background.

Extended Play/Use

- Label and place a few of the blocks on the table. Ask the child to choose the named block from the collection of blocks displayed.
- Select two blocks from a pile of blocks in front of the child and name (or sign) one of the two letters displayed. Ask the child to find the block with the named letter on it and sign it. If the child is correct, they take the block, and if not, the blocks are both returned to the pile of blocks. As the child gains mastery, additional blocks could be included to increase the choices available to the child.
- Print simple words on cards (no double letters). Encourage the child to spell the words using the blocks.
- Encourage the child to stack the blocks in alphabetical order (with an alphabet strip if needed).
- Sign letters in random order. Ask the child to select the signed letter from the blocks displayed on a flat surface and build a tower based on the letters signed.

Play/Use with Others

- Building and stacking with ASL Language Learning Blocks can easily be turned into a group activity, promoting social skills and teamwork. As children work together, they develop communication skills, turn-taking, and learn how to collaborate effectively.
- Create single picture cards of the blocks. Children take turns drawing cards, selecting the block pictured, signing the letter featured on the block and begin creating block designs with the selected blocks.
- Children take turns drawing cards with simple words printed on them. They find the blocks with the corresponding letters and reproduce the word with the blocks.
- Children take turns stacking a tower of blocks in alphabetical order.

Alternative Uses

- Use ASL Learning Blocks to spell simple words.

DIY Alternatives

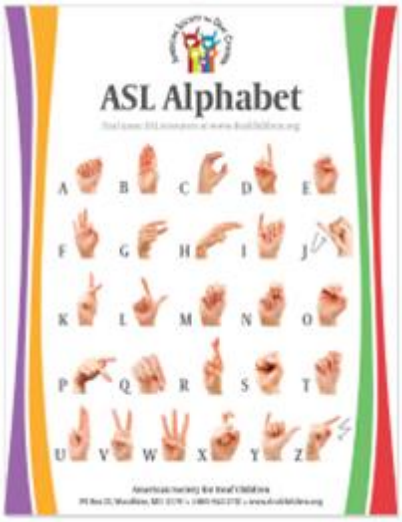
- Create your own blocks using foam cubes from the Dollar Store and pictures of the signed alphabet.

Additional Considerations:

- Display an ASL Alphabet chart for easy reference.

Resources:

- Free ASL Alphabet Chart from American Society for Deaf Children



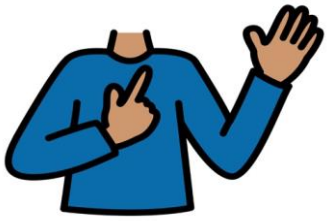
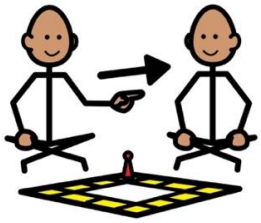
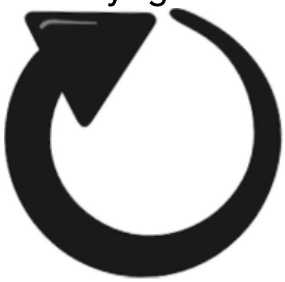
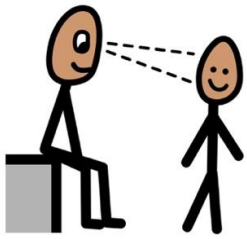
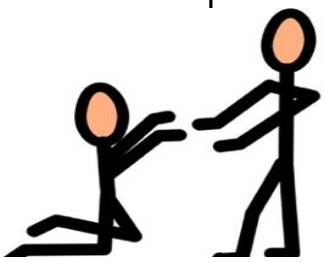
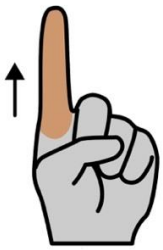
- Kids Sign Language for Kids - ASL Kids offers free video lessons , ASL alphabet poster, tips on getting started and a free ASL dictionary app.
- ASL Stories Directory - This ASL Stories Directory makes it easy to find hundreds of free videos of ASL retellings of favorite childrens' books. Research shows that reading and signing stories together helps promote essential literacy skills for ALL children: deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing. Use the ASL Stories Directory to quickly find stories by age or by the book's title.
- Fun American Sign Language Games to Help You Learn ASL - provides a list of easy games to play with common classroom materials. There is also a list of other games for purchase.

Ohio Early Learning Standards

- LL: Language and Communication. Develops and expands understanding of vocabulary and concepts (1b.).
- LL: Print Awareness: Develops knowledge of print organization. (3.a.).
- LL: Print Awareness. Develops knowledge of the alphabet (3b.).
- PW: Motor Development: Demonstrates developing control of fundamental fine motor skills, including hand-eye coordination (1.b.).
- AL: Engagement and Persistence: Persists in completing a task with increasing concentration (1.c.).

Words to Encourage Play/Use

In addition to the 26 letters represented in the blocks, consider the following:

My turn 	Your turn 	Try again 
Watch me 	Make like this 	Want help? 
Finger up 	Make fist 	Sign 

*"Adaptations" adapted from: Haugen's Modes for Adapting Toys based on materials from the "Let's Play" Project at the University of Buffalo

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