

Fingerspelling Rules

When to fingerspell:

- When signing proper nouns (names of people and places, things, etc.)
- When signing a concept with great emphasis
- When signing a concept that has no sign
- When signing a concept for a new English word that has no sign yet
- When signing a concept that you don't know the sign for
- When signing to clarify
- When signing abbreviations/acronyms

How to fingerspell:

- Palm forward
- Dominant hand approximately in front of your dominant shoulder
- Clearly (speed comes naturally with practice)
- Hand does not move unless a letter is repeated, then move slightly to the right

Repeating guidelines:

The following letters can be duplicated by repeat touching but don't have to be:

A, D, E, F, M, N, O, S, T

The rest of the letters are repeated by slightly moving the hand outwardly.

* exception, Z

Tips for recognition

Context: focus on clues in the conversation which alert you about the topic and therefore reduce the word choices and increases the possibilities and speed of recognition.

Configuration: focus on the whole word, not letter by letter.

Closure: use the above skills to piece together the word based on what you observe.