



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Baby's Got Book - 17-Month Old Baby Can Read! Texas Toddler Reads and Signs at 17 Months**

On Monday March 10th, the Today Show interviewed baby Elizabeth Barrett and her parents. Elizabeth has been able to read since she was 14-months old and her parents attribute some of her extraordinary ability to learning sign language. The Today Show website states,

*"Katy Barrett and her husband, Michael, are speech pathologists, and when Elizabeth was born, they started teaching her sign language along with spoken language. "We tried to do everything we could to try to stimulate her language growth," Michael Barrett told Today's Ann Curry. "From day one Katy has been using sign language with her. We think anything relating to language is a good thing to nurture."*

Parents across Canada and in the US are also learning to sign with their babies using in baby sign language classes and from books. In 2001, Sara Bingham founded **WeeHands** whose instructors teach parents to use sign language with their babies and in 2007 her book [The Baby Signing Book](#) was published. WeeHands Instructors are often teachers, speech language pathologists and early childhood educators who have knowledge of sign language. In WeeHands classes a strong emphasis on teaching parents both American Sign Language (ASL) vocabulary and on language development strategies. This same emphasis is carried over into [The Baby Signing Book](#). On a number of websites, [The Baby Signing Book](#) is already considered a parenting essential.

Beginning as early as eight months of age, babies can use sign language to clearly tell their parents what they want or what they are thinking. Imagine the relief parents feel when their baby can sign "more milk", "look dog", "change diaper", or "tooth hurts" . . . instead of grunting or whining! Not only does using sign language with babies and toddlers reduce frustration, it also enhances child-parent attachment, increases vocabulary, and strengthens babies' cognitive skills.

Bingham remarks *"I know that since the Today Show piece aired on Monday, it's been one of the most watched videos according to MSN homepage. I don't doubt it. Although this little girl is exceptional, I do believe that signing with babies and toddlers helps their language development. Part of the reason behind this is because when you sign with babies you are adding a visual component. As well, because a baby or toddler has more expressive abilities they are able to lead and interact more during time with their parents...this includes story time!"*

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If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Sara Bingham, please call 905-655-9052 or e-mail at [info@weehands.com](mailto:info@weehands.com)

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