

Bay Islands Sign Language is produced with extensive co-formation*

Background: The presence of Usher's Syndrome since the late 19th century in communities in the Bay Islands led to the emergence of a shared sign language used by deaf-blind, deaf-sighted and hearing-sighted people.

signer's hand, signer's body



Signer places own hand on own cheek

signer's hand, addressee's body



Signer places own hand on addressee's cheek

addressee's hand, signer's body



Signer places addressee's hand on own cheek

addressee's hand, addressee's body



Signer places addressee's hand on addressee's cheek

Fig 1: Four ways of producing one-handed body-anchored signs



Visual form of NOTHING



NOTHING produced by 'sandwiching' addressee's hand



NOTHING co-formed with signer and addressee's hands



NOTHING produced by rubbing addressee's leg

Fig 2: Four ways of producing NOTHING

* Co-formation: Production of signs using the signer's and the addressee's hands and bodies

and perceived visually, tactilely and proprioceptively



Fig 3: HOUSE perceived visually



Fig 4: HOUSE perceived tactilely (addressee holds signer's hand)



Fig 5: HOUSE perceived proprioceptively (signer forms HOUSE using addressee's hands)

Even when sighted people are addressed, signs are frequently co-formed and perceived tactilely and proprioceptively.

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