

# GIVE ME A SIGN! FUN WITH DIVING SIGN LANGUAGE

## AGES

Children 8+ years  
Multigenerational

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Learn about diving hand signals, then use them in an “underwater” obstacle course! Easily adaptable for children of all ages by controlling the number of hand signals you learn, or by adjusting the difficulty of the obstacle course. Good for families as well! See Resources for videos created by Allyson Brickner of Southwest Public Libraries in Grove City, OH. Suggested runtime: 45 min



Image source: Shutterstock

## TIP:

See Printables for an infographic on organizing multigenerational events, created by Stacey Brown of Augusta Memorial Public Library, Augusta, WI.

## TIP:

When designing the courses, be sure to keep mobility issues in mind. Keep spaces wide and provide alternate routes for those in wheelchairs.

## ADAPTATION:

If you can find a diving instructor, dive school, or diving enthusiast in your area, have them come in and talk about their experiences, bring their diving equipment and explain what hand signals they use.

## MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

To introduce the topic, show a photo of a diver in a wetsuit/mask, or watch a video of scuba divers underwater. Discuss how communication changes when diving. For example, the mask/regulator makes seeing faces difficult, and divers can't talk. If you have a diving face mask/snorkel available you can use them to demonstrate. What might you need to say to someone under water? How could you make that clear without talking?

### Hand Signals Practice

- Divide participants into groups of 2–4.
- Give each group at least one copy of the scuba hand signals page.
- Have them practice communicating with each other using only hand signals.
- Then tell a diving story for the whole room to practice together. It might sound something like this: “You have just dived into the ocean. Get with your buddy! (They show the “get with buddy” sign.) Tell your buddy you want to dive down! (They show the “go down” sign.) Or have groups make up their own stories.

## IMAGINARY DIVE

Materials:

- Face masks (pandemic style), goggles/swim masks, or crafted masks
- Obstacle cards or objects

Instructions:

Keep participants in groups of 2–4. Have them wear “scuba” masks of some sort. One person in each group is the “dive leader” and directs the other members around the obstacle course using only hand signals. You can set up the obstacle course in your programming space beforehand, or have participants write/draw obstacles on poster board to spread around the room. For example, a sign might say “Oh, no! You're running short on air!” At that obstacle, divers must solve the problem by using the dive sign “ascend.” You can also designate a volunteer to read each obstacle card out loud (for participants who cannot read).

## UNIQUE SPACE AND/OR PERSONNEL NEEDS

Solo-librarian friendly

### TIP:

In addition to the handout, play YouTube videos that demonstrate diving hand signals! See Resources for videos made by Allyson Brickner of Southwest Public Libraries in Grove City, OH.

### TIP:

To make the experience even more immersive, set up a laptop/projector to project a live underwater scene that participants can “swim” through.

## RESOURCES

### Web

Video (silent) by Allyson Brickner of Southwest Public Libraries in Grove City, OH: <https://youtu.be/-2p0H2GNSr8>

Video (with speech) by Allyson Brickner of Southwest Public Libraries in Grove City, OH: <https://youtu.be/vEGJQ3z1Eto>

“What Is Scuba Diving Like?” [1:12] from Groupon: <https://bit.ly/2QXmR3T>

“Diving Underwater with PADI Instructor Thomas Koch” [1:15]: <https://bit.ly/3wEb9KI>

Basic diving signs from *For Divers*: <https://bit.ly/3yBRMnn>

Scuba diving hand signals and printable from PADI: <https://bit.ly/3xkvrJW>

### Books

#### Non-fiction

*Scubasigns: The Guide to All Diving Hand Signals* (2009) by Dave van Stijn and Mike Harterink (adult)

#### Fiction

*The Aquanaut* (2021) by Jill Heinerth and Jamie Kim (children's)

*Pete the Cat: Scuba-Cat* (Pete the Cat: I Can Read! series) (2016) by James Dean and Kimberly Dean (children's)

*Scuba Dog* (2016) by Ann Marie Stephens and Jess Golden (children's)

### Printables

Tips for Running Multigenerational Programs

### TIP:

In “Diving Underwater with PADI Instructor Thomas Koch,” a deaf diving instructor explains the difference between diving signals and ASL. Subtitles/no sound.

# TIPS FOR PLANNING MULTIGENERATIONAL /FAMILY EVENTS



## CHOOSE A SAFE HOST LOCATION

Be sure to consider the needs of seniors and young children. Look for potential hazards from falling, electricity, and water. Avoid pools/lakes where there is no lifeguard. Look for even walkways in outdoor spaces. Find ground level facilities or those that are handicap accessible.

## ENSURE ADEQUATE SEATING

Provide some chairs with arms to help the elderly get up more easily. Offer high chairs or secure seats for toddlers. Allow space between seats for folks to navigate with walkers and canes. Reserve seating near aisles for parents with strollers and those in wheelchairs or who may need extra space.



## INCLUSIVE ACTIVITIES

Try to include activities that everyone can participate in, such as puzzles, crafts, games, singing, or watching movies.

## SERVE APPEALING FOODS/DRINKS

Offer kid-friendly finger food or other snack options that are easy to serve and appeal to a variety of age groups. This is helpful for parents as well as seniors who may have difficulty with passing heavy dishes or carrying trays to a table.



## BOOST HEARING & VISUAL AIDS

Provide microphones and/or sound system amplification so that everyone can hear the presentation. Utilize a large screen with a large font on visual presentations so that even those seated in the back can read the slides.

## KEEP IT SHORT & ENGAGING

Allow time for folks to get up and move around. It can be challenging to sit for a long presentation. Break it up into smaller bits to allow time for restroom breaks and snacks.



## OTHER MATTERS FOR CONVENIENCE



- Find a location with a kitchen space if planning to serve foods.
- Make things user-friendly for seniors and parents of small children (e.g., restrooms with changing tables, accessible restroom facilities, elevators, handicap parking, etc.).
- Place trash and recycling bins near exits for easier cleanup.
- Ensure plenty of power supplies, outlets, and extension cords for AV equipment and/or small appliances for keeping food hot.

For additional tips visit  
<https://productionplus.com/blog/event-solutions/multigenerational-event-planning-tips/>

Infographic created by Stacey Brown Augusta Memorial Public Library, Augusta, WI