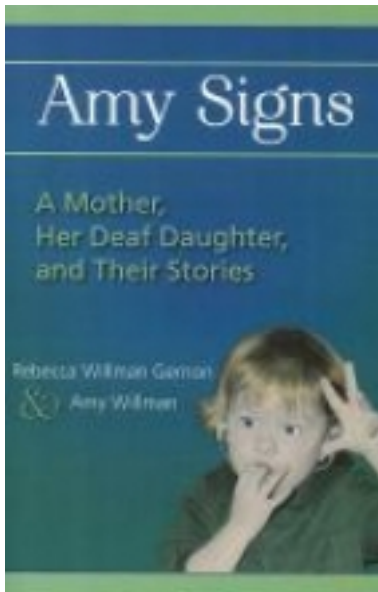


Amy Signs: A Mother, Her Deaf Daughter, and Their Stories



“Thirty-seven years ago, I vowed to write a truthful book about raising a deaf child.” Rebecca Willman Gernon followed through on her promise with her deaf daughter Amy Willman in this extraordinary new narrative. Many stories have been told about a parent’s struggle to help her deaf child succeed in a mostly hearing world. *Amy Signs* marks a signature departure in that both Rebecca and Amy relate their perspectives on their journey together.

When she learns of 11-month-old Amy’s deafness in 1969, Rebecca fully expresses her anguish, and traces all of the difficulties she endured in trying to find the right educational environment for Amy. The sacrifices of the rest of her family weighed heavily on her, also. Though she resolved to place four-year-old Amy in Nebraska’s residential school for deaf students, the emotional toll seemed too much to bear.

Amy’s view acts as the perfect counterpoint. Interwoven with her mother’s story, Amy’s account confirms that signing served her best. She summarizes life in boarding school as “laughter and homesickness.” She laughed with all of her deaf friends, though felt homesick at times. Amy thanks her mother for the gift of sign, asserting that a mainstream education would never have led her to earn a master’s degree and later teach American Sign Language at the University of Nebraska. *Amy Signs* is a positive albeit cautionary tale for parents of deaf children today whose only choice is a mainstreamed education.

Author: Rebecca Willman Gernon; Amy Willman

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