

## **Finger-spelling**

Finger-spelling is an important part of British Sign Language and is a visual representation of the written alphabet. It is often used to spell English words when there is no sign equivalent for a word or to indicate a place or the name of a person.

Mouth patterns are used with finger spelling to make it clearer. So for example, when finger spelling a name it is 'mouthed' at the same time. Some BSL signs consist only of one letter and adding a mouth pattern for the English word they represent clarifies the sign. For example, the sign MOTHER is achieved by fingerspelling the letter M and simultaneously expressing the mouth pattern for the word 'mother'.

The vowels of the English alphabet (A E I O U) are indicated on each of the five fingers of the 'dominant' hand (depending on whether the signer is left-handed or right-handed).