

Communicating with your baby

Your baby is communicating in lots of ways

Young babies may not be talking but they are communicating in lots of ways through cries, sounds, facial expressions, looking at things and body movements. We must be aware of these things and try and interpret them because by responding to them we encourage the baby to communicate more. As the baby grows they will learn to focus on people or objects and will also learn that they can use communication as a tool to get what they want. It is important to talk to your baby as much as possible. Studies show that talkative mothers generally have babies that are using more words than their peers with quiet mothers.

There are lots of ways to help your baby learn language:

Talk to your baby and speak clearly

Talk to your baby about what is happening now and what they can see

Don't use a dummy / pacifier

Switch off the TV and play with your baby (preferably limit TV as much as possible in the early years)

Repeat back their babble

Always give eye contact when you talk to them and let your baby see the shape of your mouth

Try and have a push-chair that has baby facing mother

Share attention, look at things together, point to them and talk about them

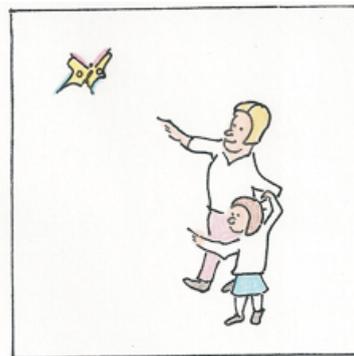
Describe the surroundings to your baby when you go out

Listen to, and acknowledge all your child's attempts at communication, and wait and give plenty of time for their response to your communication

Be aware of their language level, use small sentences, but avoid baby talk

Use lots of intonation when speaking

Do not put pressure on your child to speak or repeat words, that is not how children learn to speak, they learn by listening





Using sign, prior to the emergence of speech

The use of sign with babies prior to speech has become a hot topic in recent years. There is a commonly held misconception that teaching your baby to sign will somehow delay the onset of speech. This is definitely not the case. Research shows that using signs with your baby not only promotes the development of speech and language but has been shown to aid cognitive skills and language development later in childhood. So start to use signs with your child as soon as they are born if you want to. You can use a signing system that already exists or make up your own (as long as you are consistent with it). The baby may not respond straight away but just start with a few simple signs for commonly used words and use the sign every time you say the word. Initially this will help the baby understand the spoken word, but eventually they should start to copy and use the signs themselves.

For more information on child development, and activities to develop speech and language skills see our website www.icommunicatetherapy.com



To learn more about child development, communication, and developing your child's speech and language skills, you can read about and purchase books on our website www.icommunicatetherapy.com. Click this link to see our online Resource Centre

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Suggested Reading

The Wonder Years: Helping Your Baby and Young Child Successfully Negotiate The Major Developmental Milestones by American Academy Of Pediatrics (Author), Tanya Remer Altmann

Developing Child, The by Helen Bee and Denise Boyd

Milestones: Normal Speech And Language Development Across the Lifespan by Jr., Ph.D. Oller, et al John W.

Child Development by Laura E. Berk

Ages and Stages: A Parent's Guide to Normal Childhood Development by Charles E. Schaefer and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo

Child Development, Second Edition: A Practitioner's Guide (Social Work Practice with Children and Families) by Douglas D Davies

Child Development by Robert S. Feldman

What's Going on in There? : How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life by Lise Eliot

Child Development: Principles and Perspectives by J. Littlefield Cook & G. Cook

Let's Talk Together - Home Activities for Early Speech & Language Development by Amy Chouinard and Cory Poland

Born to Talk: An Introduction to Speech and Language Development by Lloyd M. Hult and Merle R. Howard

Speaking, Listening and Understanding: Games for Young Children by Catherine Delamain and Jill Spring

Childhood Speech, Language & Listening Problems: What Every Parent Should Know by Patricia McAleer Hamaguchi

The Parents Guide to Speech and Language Problems by Debbie Feit

The Handbook of Child Language Disorders by Richard G. Schwartz

Does My Child Have a Speech Problem? by Katherine L. Martin

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