



# Talking to your baby

Building language and communication skills from birth to nine months

## Talk to your baby – give them the best start

Talking and listening to children from the moment they're born helps them develop good language and communication skills.

Most brain development occurs from birth to age two. The best way to stimulate babies brains is to talk to them more.

Talking and listening to your child will benefit you both.

Your child will feel valued and loved, and the two of you will form a close bond with each other. When your child is older, knowing how to communicate will help ease frustration. The more words babies hear, the more they will use when they are older.

You don't need to be an expert to help your child develop good communication skills. All you need is a listening ear and the willingness to chat to your child whenever you can.

Babies can communicate before they can talk and they want to interact with people. They make noises, cry, move their bodies, babble and make different faces. They are looking for a response from you and you can help by smiling, being face to face and talking back.

### **Talking to your baby matters because:**

- it will help them learn to talk
  - children learn to talk by listening to others and being listened to;
- it will help your child learn about the world;
- it will help them to learn reading and writing because good language skills form the base for literacy;
- it will help your child develop good social skills and friendships with others.

## Tips for talking to your baby

- Talking to your baby can easily fit into your **daily routine**. Talk about what you can see when you walk to the shops. Chat to your baby during bath time, feeding, nappy changing.
- **Get eye contact** with your baby when chatting and be **face to face** whenever possible.
- **Talk to your baby about what you are doing**. Show them the things around you, especially when your baby's interested in something like a favourite toy, an object, a person or the tap running. **Talk about things as they happen**.
- **Copy your baby's noises and actions**. Babies love it when you copy their sneezes, yawns, and babbles etc. Take turns and you'll be having a conversation!
- **Have fun with songs and nursery rhymes**, especially those with actions like 'row, row your boat' and 'round and round the garden'. Pause before a high point in the song to keep their interest and give them a chance to interact with you such as a smile or laugh.
- **Try and work out what your baby might want to say** and say it for him/her. Use simple words and sentences such as 'up' and 'you want milk/dinner?' so your baby will learn to link words and actions.
- **Always respond** when your baby tries to communicate with you. Use your face and voice to highlight what you're saying and to get your baby's interest.

## You may want to talk to someone if:

- your baby is not making babbling noises by six months;
- you think your baby might have difficulty hearing you or has had a lot of colds or ear infections;
- there is a family history of hearing or speech and language difficulties;
- you find it difficult to talk to your baby;
- you feel your baby is not interested in communication.

**If you have any concerns about your baby's communication or would like to know more about what you can do to encourage your baby's language and communication skills contact the Early Communication Team through your local childrens' centre.**

### Childrens centre details

County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1UD

**Tel:** (01983) 823142

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