



Talk, Sing and Point

WHY?

Babies are learning language from the moment they are born. To a newborn baby, speech is just sound. Then, day by day, they learn that the sounds have meaning. This process depends on how much people talk to them. Every time you talk, sing or point to what you are talking about, you provide clues to the meaning of what you are saying. You are providing important information to their brains about how language works.

As your child develops, talking with them and answering their questions is a way to teach them about the world. By talking with them, you will also get to know the fascinating person they are becoming!

Tips for Infants (Newborn – 12 months)

Talk A Lot

Talk to your baby from the time they are born during activities like changing, feeding, bathing and while running errands. Describe what you are doing. Label the objects around you by naming and pointing to them.

Go Back and Forth

When your baby makes a sound, show excitement in your face and voice! Respond to their sound with words. See how long you can keep the “conversation” going. It is very powerful when the two of you can stay focused on each other for a while.

Use a Playful Voice

Talk with a gentle, playful voice. Exaggerate the sounds of the words. This may feel silly at first, but it is actually very important. Babies pay extra attention and learn more when you talk this way.

Use Real Words

Don't just use “baby talk,” also use real words. The more words your baby hears, the larger their vocabulary will grow. Think of words as nourishment for your baby's brain!

Sing

Sing songs to your baby. This is a fun way for them to learn language. You might have certain songs for special times of the day, like bath time or before bedtime.

Use Any Language

It doesn't matter what language you speak with your infant. All languages are equally beneficial.

Rhyme Time

Make up rhyming chants for daily routines starring your baby. A bath rhyme might go like this "Soapy Samantha in the tub/Rub-a-dub-dub"

Name Body Parts

When changing or dressing your baby, make a game of naming and pointing to body parts. "Where's Oliver's nose?" Trying singing a round of "Head, shoulders, knees and toes."

Step by Step

As you go about daily activities with your child, talk about the steps involved. When starting a bath say "First we turn on the warm water. Then we add some cold water until it's just right."

Ask and Answer Questions

Engage your baby by asking and answering questions about the things that interest them. "Does the ball fit into the tube?" Wait to see how they respond. Then help provide the answer. "No, it's too big."

Point to Objects

Point to objects and name them, especially things that interest your child like body parts or familiar objects around the home. Older infants will also start to communicate by pointing.

Follow Their Interests

Your baby shows you what they're interested in by looking or reaching. If it's safe, move those objects closer so your baby can examine them. Name them and describe their features.