



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 Toddlers (12-36 Months)

Describe Life

Talk about the things you're doing and what is going on around you. Have conversations as you walk around the neighborhood or do errands.

Be Specific

The more specific you can be with words, the more your child will learn. For example, instead of saying "Let's go," you could say, "Let's go shopping at the grocery store to buy some food."

Add Ideas

Help grow your child's vocabulary by expanding on what they say. For example, if they say "doggie," you can respond with, "Yes, that is a doggie. That doggie is brown and soft."

Listen and Respond

Listen to your toddler's questions and answer them. Have a conversation. This is when the most powerful learning takes place.

Ask Questions

Get your toddler thinking. Have them explain what they are doing or what they think is going to happen. You may get some funny answers!

Use Your Hands

When you talk about something, point to it. This helps your child understand what you mean. Encourage your child to point too. "Can you point to the triangle?" This will help them connect new words to the objects they represent.

Sing and Recite

Sing songs and recite nursery rhymes. Choose ones you remember from your own childhood, read in books, or make up new ones.

Use Any Language

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

Fill in the Blank

When you sing your child's favorite songs, leave out words for them to fill in. Or you can say the wrong word and see if they catch you.

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"

Photo Album

Sit with your child and look at photos of family members, friends or pets. Talk about what you see in the pictures and the special details or memories.

Out and About

Errands—from the post office to the pharmacy—teach your child about the community and the people in it. Talk about the tasks involved. If you're not in a hurry, lift your child up so they can see behind the counter.

I Spy

Play I Spy. For example, say "I spy a bird. Can you find it?" If they have trouble finding it, give a hint about where to look. You can play I Spy almost anywhere.

Follow Their Fingers

Young toddlers communicate with gestures, especially pointing. Label and talk about the things they point to. Encourage your child to point to the objects you name. "Where is the pig. There it is."

Remember the Day

In the evening, get cozy and talk to your child about what happened during the day. Remember what you did and the people you saw. Was it fun? Was it hard?

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."