

Conversations with your baby

Rationale:

Your baby will start to communicate with you from birth through crying, eye contact and listening. Later she will learn to coo, babble and eventually use words. When you talk and communicate with your baby, you build your baby's language – and your relationship too.

Age range information

0-1 years

What you need

Talking to your baby does not require any toys or equipment. You just need each other.

How to do it

You do not need to make a special time to talk to your baby. You can just chat to her as you are going about your everyday activities – for example, 'Daddy's vacuuming the rug to get rid of the dust that makes us sneeze'. This gives her exposure to vocabulary and sentences and different tones of voice – this is how she begins to learn language and speech herself.

Many parents feel a bit silly talking to a little baby who does not talk back. The more you talk with your baby, the easier it becomes – and you will eventually be rewarded with your baby's responses. Here's how to start:

- Newborn babies cannot coo or babble yet, but they love faces. Put your face close to hers and make eye contact. Smile and talk quietly and gently to her. It does not matter what you say: the main thing is to connect with her and create a loving, warm feeling.
- Try talking in an exaggerated sing-song voice. Your baby will love watching your eyes sparkle and your mouth stretching out around words.
- Listen to your baby's first efforts at cooing and babbling and then respond. You can copy your baby's sounds by cooing or babbling back. You can also have a pretend conversation – for example, 'Yes that *was* a wet diaper, wasn't it? Does that feel better now? Yes, it does'.
- Use gestures like waving or pointing.
- Leave a gap when it is your baby's turn to 'talk' again. This teaches your baby about the pattern of conversation.
- If your baby does not take a turn, or is not interested in chatting right now, try again another time. Let your baby's interest and responses guide you.



Recommended Reads by the National Library Board

Recommended Reads

- [Talk to me, baby: how you can support young children's language development](#)
- [At the park](#)
- [Baby sign language](#)