

Tips for Talking: children aged 0 - 3 months

As parents, you are the most important people in your baby's early development. The way you talk and play with your baby can make a real difference to how they develop and learn. By trying a few simple ideas you can make a significant contribution to your baby's communication skills.

When babies are born they respond differently to the stimulation around them. Some babies are 'easy' to stimulate. Others are 'sensitive' and quickly become over stimulated. They are not able to interact with you for long so are best talked to in short, frequent sessions and you need to use a calm, soothing voice with them. Other babies take time to warm up and need you to be lively and entertaining. You may feel that they are not interested to begin with, but if you persist they will soon respond.

Watch your baby to see how they respond to you.

Children will develop language skills at different rates, but at this stage typically children will be:

• Telling the difference between happy and sad expressions

• Crying to express how they feel

• Recognising familiar voices such as their mum and dad

• Smiling at around 5-6 weeks old

• Sticking out their tongue and move their lips when you speak to them



• Making cooing noises by about 3 months

• Laughing at around 3 months old

• Responding to loud noises such as the vacuum cleaner, the door slamming

• Showing a real interest in your face

For more information, visit the Talking Point website at www.talkingpoint.org.uk

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Long before babies start to use words, they are trying to communicate with you. They do this through looking, making noises and crying, using different facial expressions and body movements. By watching your baby you can start to understand what they are telling you. By responding to your baby you are teaching them how to communicate in a really important way.

Here are some ideas to encourage your baby's communication development at this stage:

- Stroke and cuddle your baby – this will make them feel secure and happy and stimulate their physical development.
- Sing and chat to your baby using a gentle voice. Babies love nursery rhymes and lullabies. This will help your baby develop good listening and talking skills.
- Using interesting facial expressions will hold your baby's attention and will often make them smile.
- Look through books together. Babies are especially interested in simple black and white shapes and will enjoy looking at the pictures and listening to your voice.
- Spend some 'quiet time' with your baby every day. This means reducing background noise as much as possible by turning off the television or the radio. Give your baby your undivided attention. This will help them learn to concentrate and listen.



If you have concerns about your child's speech or language at this stage, let your Health Visitor know. She can make an appointment with a Speech and Language Therapist for you.



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