

Tips for Talking: children aged 3 - 6 months

As parents, 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.

At this stage, babies are still interested in faces and voices but start to show interest in their surroundings. They begin to look at toys and watch other adults and children. As parents, you are still the most important people in your baby's life.

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

- Babbling and making sounds such as 'ba ba'.
- Taking turns making sounds. Taking turns means that your baby makes a noise, you say something back and then your baby makes another noise.
- Making a wider range of different sounds.
- Recognising familiar voices – people they hear frequently.
- By 6 months, recognising very familiar words that you use with actions such as 'no', 'up you come'.
- Making noises to get your attention.



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

- Sing and chat to your baby. Babies love nursery rhymes. This will help them develop good listening and talking skills.
- Look through books together. Let your baby hold the book and try to turn the pages.
- 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.
- Encourage your baby to take turns with talking. When they make a noise, smile and say something back. Then wait for your baby to make another noise (keep looking and smiling at them). These are the first stages of a conversation.
- Play physical games that involve facial expressions, e.g. 'peek a boo'.
- Introduce musical instruments such as bells and rattles.
- Play repetitive games so your baby can learn what happens next, e.g. action songs, bouncing.
- Help your baby to express themselves. Encourage them to ask for more, e.g. shake the rattle and wait for them to show you they want more by looking at you, making a noise, reaching towards the toy. Offer your baby choices e.g. show them an apple or a banana so they can choose what to eat, offer two toys so they can choose what to play with.



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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