

Tips for Encouraging Speech and Language Development

- ▶ Use a high-pitched, sing-song voice. This helps get and keep your baby's attention while you talk.
- ▶ Play with sounds. Get silly while playing and make sounds that connect with what your child is doing.
- ▶ Use facial expressions and gestures to communicate the meaning of words.
- ▶ Describe your actions as you dress, feed, and bathe your child. Pairing the same words with routine activities is a great way to develop language.
- ▶ Encourage two-way communication. When your child communicates with you using sounds, words, or gestures, be sure to respond and take turns in "conversation."
- ▶ Read with your child. "Reading" can simply mean describing pictures without following the written words. Choose books with large, colorful pictures, and encourage your child to point to and name familiar objects.
- ▶ Expand your child's vocabulary by building on the words they already know. For example, if your child says "dog," you could say "Yes, that's a big dog!"
- ▶ Reword your child's phrases. If your child makes a speech or language error, respond with their phrase in the correct form. This helps them learn proper pronunciation and grammar. For example, if your child says "Doggy big," you can respond with "Yes, the doggy is big."

Two Types of Communication Skills

From birth baby begins to develop the two communication skills they will continue to build on and use throughout their life:

- Receptive communication is the ability to receive and understand a message from another person. Baby demonstrates this skill by turning their head towards your voice and responding to simple directions.
- Expressive communication is the ability to convey a message to another person through sounds, speech, signs, or writing. Crying, babbling, and using body language are examples of baby's early expressive skills.



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An Introduction to Speech and Language Development



FREE tools to maximize child development

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*Remember to correct your child's age for prematurity.