



Talk To Your Baby



Registered Charity No: 1105977

Communicate with your grandchild

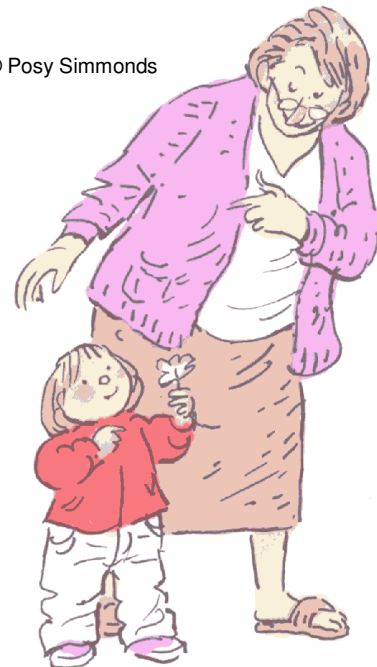
Babies are born to be sociable. They love to communicate and interact with their carers. Talking and listening to young children from the earliest age helps them to develop good language and communication skills, which enables them to express themselves, listen, learn, read, write and socialise better.

When adults take time to communicate with young children, it makes them feel valued and builds their confidence. With seventy-five per cent of brain development occurring in the first two years of life, it is never too early to start providing the stimulation and attention that babies need.

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There are concerns among headteachers at the poor communication skills of young children arriving at nursery and school. Many of these children may not have had enough opportunities to develop their communication skills as babies and toddlers.

Parents, carers and family members all play an important role in a child's support network. Many grandparents have a childcare role and many have regular contact with their grandchildren. This places grandparents at the heart of that network, especially since they have the experience to exercise particular patience to listen to young children.



Simple, everyday activities such as talking, listening, reading together and singing songs and nursery rhymes provide children with an enjoyable and stimulating environment. They can be equally as enjoyable for adults, and they are a great way for grandparent and grandchild to bond.

This pack contains some ideas for grandparents on talking to children in everyday situations, sharing books together and enjoying nursery rhymes and music. It has been produced by Talk To Your Baby, the early language campaign of the National Literacy Trust, which encourages parents and carers to talk more to children from birth to three, in association with the Grandparents' Association.

For more information call 020 7587 1842, email talktoyourbaby@literacytrust.org.uk or visit www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk. Contact the Grandparents' Association Advice Line on 0845 434 9585.

www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk

www.grandparents-association.org.uk

Talking with your grandchild

Everyday talking tips

- Talk about what you are doing as you carry out everyday activities, such as feeding or bathing your grandchild, or changing her nappy.
- Everything is new and interesting for your grandchild. Point out all the things you can see around you – the photos in your room, the trees in the park or the cars passing by on the road.
- Use the language that you know best; it doesn't have to be English.
- Look at your grandchild as you chatter. This shows him how much you value him, and it helps him to focus on your words, tone, expressions and movement.



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- Give your grandchild time to respond. This may be through a coo, a babble or a smile. Show her how interested you are by listening intently and responding.
- When you are playing together, make lots of sounds to go with the actions, such as "Woof woof" if you are playing with a cuddly toy dog.
- If your grandchild says something incorrectly, say it back the right way, e.g. "Goggy bited it." "Yes, the dog bit it."
- Try to limit your grandchild's daily TV time. Always turn off the TV when you are not watching it as the background noise can be an unhelpful distraction. When you do allow TV time, try to watch TV together for a short period only and talk about what is happening on screen.
- Watching a favourite video/DVD is more helpful than watching new programmes, as the repetition and familiarity of words can help your grandchild to learn.
- Like adults, babies don't always feel like being social, especially if hungry, tired or uncomfortable. Respect your grandchild's need to take time out.

Sharing books and talking together

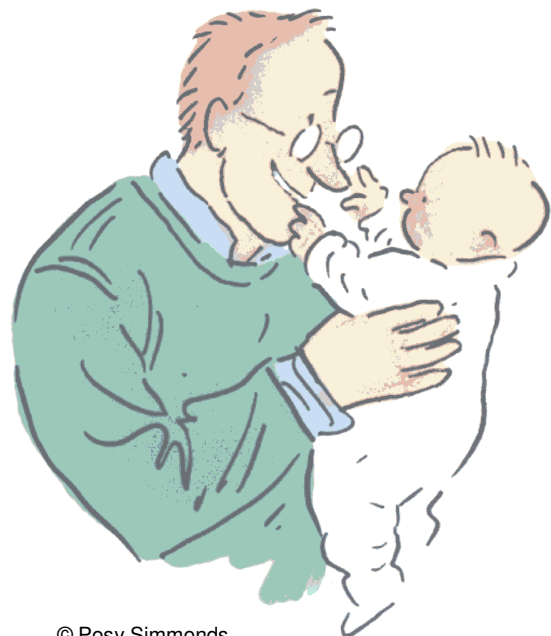
- Find a quiet place, turn off the TV and radio so there are no distractions and cuddle up together with a book.
- Read the book slowly and clearly and don't be afraid to use sing-song or funny voices for characters, or for words or phrases that are repeated throughout the book. Your grandchild will enjoy the sound of your voice, and after reading a book several times will anticipate hearing the change in your tone.
- As well as reading, point to the pictures and talk about them. If there is a picture of a dog, talk about a dog that you know.
- You could use props, such as her favourite cuddly toy, to help bring the words alive and add actions to your words.
- Give your grandchild time to respond to your chatter, and listen to him. This will encourage him in his discovery of the world of words and stories.
- Don't put her under pressure to name pictures or objects, but if she follows your words, praise her and say the words again.
- Favourite books can be shared again and again. The repetition is good as it helps children to understand and remember the language they hear.
- If you live far away, make a tape or CD of stories to send to your grandchild.
- If you live nearby, visit your library for different books – it's free to join. They may hold a rhyme time or story time session that you could enjoy together.
- Don't read for too long. Young children get bored easily, so little and often is best.
- Remember, you are not teaching your grandchild to read. You learn to talk a long time before you learn to read, and book sharing is a wonderful way to help your grandchild's language development.



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Communicating through music

- Your grandchild will love the sound of your voice. Even if you don't think you sound great, she will enjoy listening to you sing, chant or hum.
- Turn off the TV and radio so your grandchild can hear your voice.
- It doesn't matter what song you sing. Pick your favourite tune, anything from a nursery rhyme to a ballad. If you enjoy it, so will he.
- If you would like to learn some new songs or rhymes, you could visit the library to borrow rhyming books or tapes.
- Look at her as you sing, chant or hum, and watch her reaction to different parts of the tune.
- Include your grandchild's name in the song. Vary the tone of your voice. Emphasise rhyming words. It will all add to his enjoyment of the musical interaction.
- Add movement to your words. Clap your hands, or your grandchild's hands, in tune to the beat. Use your fingers to tap and your mouth to make playful noises.
- When your grandchild joins in, show her that you have noticed by giving lots of encouragement and listening to her response.
- Sing the same songs over and over. Your grandchild will not get bored of hearing them; he will look forward to the familiar sounds and words.
- If she is upset or tired, try singing a favourite song, slowly and quietly, to comfort her.



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