

Talk To Your Baby

It will make a difference

Talking and listening to children from the moment they're born helps them develop good language and communication skills. This enables them to listen and express themselves well. It also helps them to learn and develop good relationships.

Most brain development occurs from birth to age two, so babies and toddlers need stimulation as much as they need nourishing food. The best way to stimulate babies' brains is to talk to them more.

Talking and listening to your child will benefit you both. Your child will feel valued and loved, and the two of you will form a close bond with each other.

You don't need to be an expert to help your child develop good communication skills. All you need is a listening ear and the willingness to chat to your child whenever you can.

When do I start?

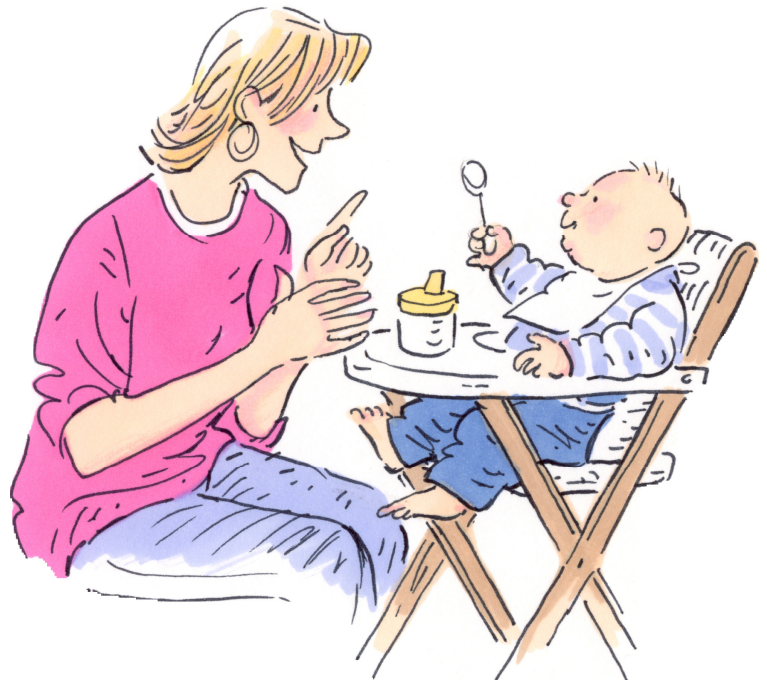
It's never too early to start talking to your child. Babies can communicate before they start talking and want to interact with people, especially family. By moving their mouth or limbs, cooing, babbling or smiling, your baby is sharing experiences with you and looking for a response. Whenever possible, try to respond by making eye-contact, smiling and talking back.

Toddlers will use some words to communicate with you, but they understand far more than they can say. By talking and listening to them you will motivate them to keep talking, which will improve their language skills.



Talk with me, play with me, read with me, sing with me. Then I'll know what it's all about.*

* Basic Skills Agency, Wales.

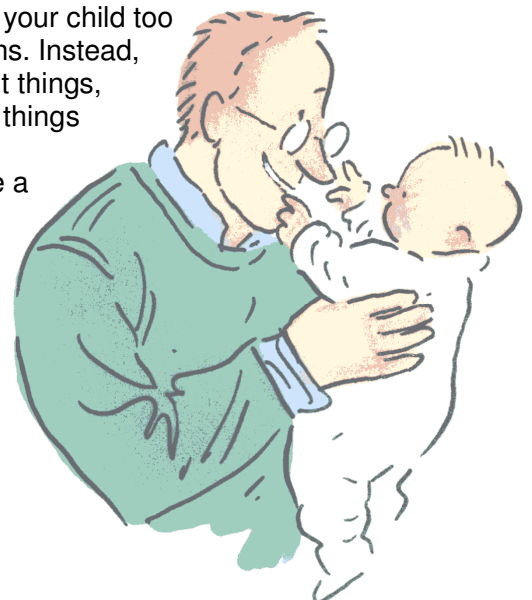


Talk about what you and your child are doing throughout the day

Talking to your child can fit easily into your daily routine. Talk about the things you see when you're on the bus or walking to the shops. Chat to your baby during bath time, or recite a nursery rhyme while changing their nappy.

The supermarket is a good place to talk to your toddler and introduce new words, as your child is sitting in the trolley facing you. Gain their attention and then describe some of the items as you put them in the trolley.

Try not to ask your child too many questions. Instead, tell them about things, especially the things they show an interest in, like a favourite toy.



Talking tips

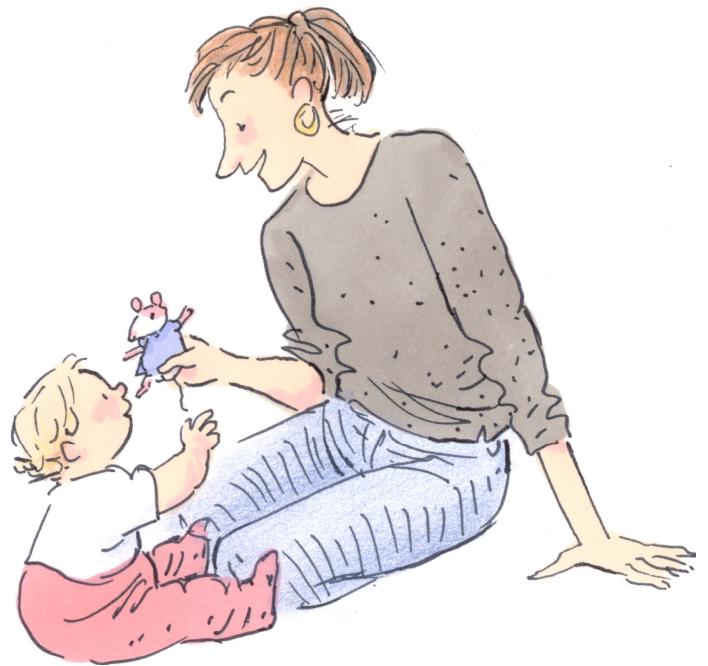
Help your child develop good language and communication skills with these tips.

1. Talk to your child when you're playing together.
2. Have fun with nursery rhymes and songs, especially those with actions.
3. Encourage your child to listen to different sounds, such as cars and animals. This will help your child's listening skills.
4. Gain your child's attention when you want to talk.
5. Increase vocabulary by giving choices, e.g. "Do you want juice or milk?"
6. Talk about things as they happen, e.g. when you're both unpacking the shopping.
7. Listen carefully and give your child time to finish talking. Take turns to speak.
8. Always respond in some way when your child says something.
9. Help your child to use more words by adding to what they've said, e.g. if they said "ball" you might say, "Yes, a red ball."
10. If your child says something incorrectly, say it back the right way, e.g. "Goggy bited it." "Yes, the dog bit it, didn't he?"
11. Try and have special time with your child each day to play with toys and picture books.
12. Limit TV time. Try to watch TV together so you can talk about what happens.

Based on the leaflet *Help Your Child To Talk*, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, 2002.



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Talking to your baby matters

1. It will help your child learn to talk, as it is from listening to your voice that babies learn to use language.
2. It will stimulate your baby's brain, helping to strengthen the connections that make learning possible.
3. It will help your child become a good reader and writer, because language skills form the foundation for literacy.
4. It will help your child develop social skills and good relationships.
5. It will show that you love and respect your child, enhancing self-esteem.
6. It will help the two of you form a close bond - communication is the basis of your relationship with each other.



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Talk To Your Baby is a campaign run by the National Literacy Trust to encourage parents and carers to communicate more with children from birth. For more information call 020 7587 1842 or visit www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk