



### Newborns to 3-month-olds may

- tell one person's voice from another's,
- tell speech from other sounds, and
- begin to remember things.

**Talking:** Talk to your baby a lot. Look her in the eye. Enjoy her responses: a waving arm, a smile, kicking legs, and so on. Engage her with language ("What a strong arm!" "Thanks for that sweet smile!").

**Reading:** Your baby may have favorite books already! Create his own library on a shelf or in a stack near his crib. He'll soon know that those books are his special things.

**Singing:** Celebrate the new sounds your baby is making. Echo them and even make up a little song or chant using just those sounds. You can babble back and forth!



### 3- to 6-month-olds may

- copy sounds and movements,
- turn toward a parent or caregiver's voice, and
- make their own sounds.

**Talking:** Even feeding a newborn is a conversation. Your baby fusses or cries and you offer him milk—the beginning of communication! Babbles and coos are his language as he strengthens his speech muscles and experiments with sound.

**Reading:** It's never too early to read to your child. As part of her bedtime routine, read her a book or two. Soon your baby will associate certain stories with falling asleep.

**Singing:** Use your body as an instrument: Clap, snap, whistle, and snort! Hearing different kinds of sounds helps your child build listening skills. It also engages his attention.





### 6- to 9-month-olds may

- copy or say the same sounds over and over, and say **mama** and **dada**,
- know the names of people and things, and
- clap and use their bodies to speak with others.



**Talking:** Fill everyday routines with talk. Build vocabulary by telling your child what you're doing ("One sock...two socks. Now we can put on your shoes. One shoe...two shoes.").

**Reading:** Point out signs around you ("Let's buy some apples. See the sign? It says 'apples.'"). This teaches that print has a purpose and words are everywhere, not just in books.

**Singing:** Babies enjoy wordplay as they form a sense of humor. Use your baby's name in a rhyming chant or song ("Silly Lily, Silly Lily, Silly Lily.").



### 9- to 12-month-olds may

- communicate by babbling or pointing,
- understand more words and commands, and
- respond to their own name and connect the names of others.

**Talking:** Lovingly acknowledge your baby's "nonsense" words, such as **ba ba** or **ma ma**, by repeating them or extending the idea ("Yes, ba, ba. Baa, baa black sheep!" "Mama's right here! Peek-a-boo!").

**Reading:** On your desktop or smartphone, make a "Who Loves Baby?" slide show of photos of family and friends. Talk about each photo ("Who loves Alex? Uncle Jorge loves Alex.").

**Singing:** Let your baby make some noise! Give her a wooden spoon and a plastic container. She'll love making simple rhythms.





### 12- to 18-month-olds may

- enjoy touching, grabbing, squishing, and tasting just about everything,
- say more names of familiar people or objects, and
- rely more on memory for words or songs.



**Talking:** Your toddler may be very interested in your cell phone. Give her a toy phone to play with and to copy your “conversation” style.

**Reading:** Read street signs while you drive around or take a neighborhood walk (“Look at the big, red stop sign. S-T-O-P spells stop.”).

**Singing:** Sing the alphabet song with your child until he can sing it by himself. Praise your child for trying and succeeding.



### 18- to 24-month-olds may

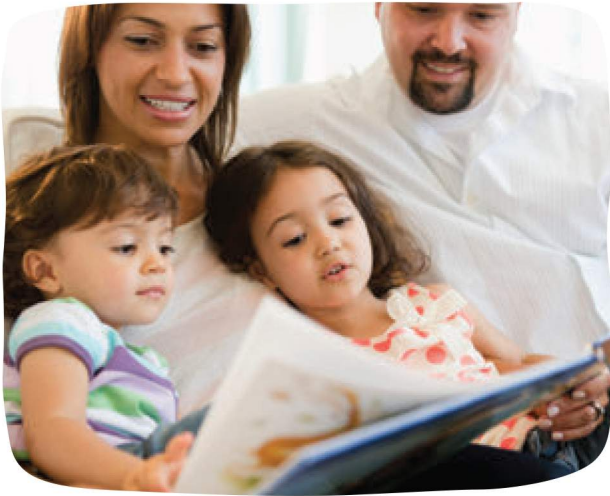
- be able to act more on their own,
- use simple two- and three-word sentences and start asking questions, and
- learn new words quickly while understanding a lot more than they can say.

**Talking:** Close your eyes and explore with your ears! Say, “Let’s listen carefully. What do you hear?” Take turns naming the sounds around you (cars moving, doors closing, people talking).

**Reading:** Let your child hold anything that can be read: menus in a restaurant, the mail as you bring it from the mailbox. Point to words and read them aloud.

**Singing:** As you sing your child’s favorite songs, substitute new words for familiar ones (“Row, row, row your stroller, gently down the street...”).





### 2-year-olds may

- use sentences of two to four words,
- point to things or pictures when they are named, and
- repeat your words and phrases.

**Talking:** Notice sounds around the neighborhood. Talk with your child about who or what might be making them.

**Reading:** Help your child start to recognize letters in the alphabet. Point them out when you see them (“Look, there’s the letter A. A is for apple!”).

**Singing:** Make up songs while you wait in line or run errands. Try putting new words to a familiar song or create a chant (“Waiting, waiting for the bus, come on, bus and pick us up!” or “Going, going to the store to buy carrots. We need more.”).



### 3-year-olds may

- carry on conversations using two to three sentences,
- complete a sentence or rhyme in a favorite story, and
- know by sight the first letter of their name.

**Talking:** Even writing an e-mail can be a conversation starter! Talk to your child about whom she would like to send a message to and what she would say.

**Reading:** Together, make a storybook of your child’s drawings (just staple them together and have your child draw a cover). Then have him “read” you the book.

**Singing:** If your child is in childcare, she is likely learning new songs there. Have her teach you a song she knows!

