

Developing language  
in babies:

**TALK  
& PLAY**

**EVERY  
DAY**

**6-12  
months**



**A helpful guide to early language development**

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**Talk & Play Every Day**  
is a parent's guide  
to help encourage your  
baby's early language and  
communication skills.  
We hope you find this  
leaflet helpful...

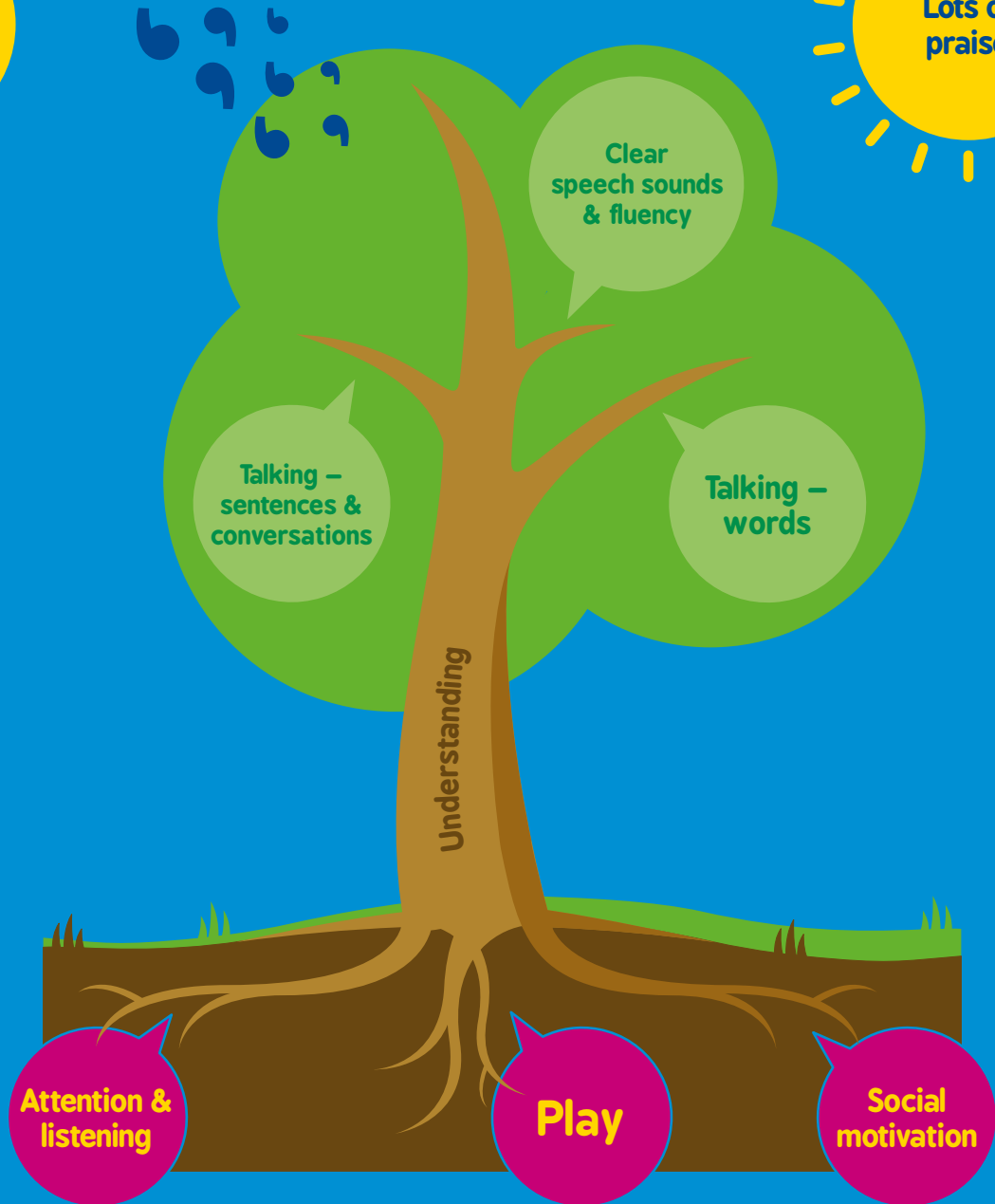


Further advice or information is available from your local  
speech and language therapist, health visitor or Children's Centre.

How communication grows...

Lots of talk

Lots of  
praise



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## At this stage of early communication development, most babies...

- Can listen to sounds, recognise familiar voices and have a sense of how people feel.
- Can understand what is being said long before they use words and may understand very familiar words you use with actions (e.g. 'no', 'up', 'come here').
- Start making sounds or 'babbling' to themselves during play and will make sounds back when someone talks to them or 'take turns' making sounds.
- Make noise to get your attention and like playing the same games with you over and over again. They will reach out towards things and people that interest them.
- Enjoy looking at books and holding and turning the pages.
- Tell you how they feel by smiling, crying, laughing, being quiet and moving their body.



# 5 ways you can help your baby learn to talk...

## LOOK

Help your baby understand you... gain his/her attention first and talk about what you are both doing or can see. **Use your actions, face and voice** to show him/her what you mean and keep it interesting.

## PLAY

Play repetitive games, so your new baby can learn what happens next (e.g. action songs, bouncing). Everything is new to your baby, so **games with everyday objects** (e.g. spoon, ball) are fun too. Games that hide or 'post' toys and blowing bubbles help children learn words like 'more' or 'gone'.

## LISTEN

Turn off the TV. It will help you and your baby to listen to each other. **Help him/her to play** with and listen to things which make sounds (e.g. rattles, door bell) and listen to other sounds such as things outside.

## SHARE

Look at pictures and books together. Let your baby hold the book or try to turn the page. Name pictures and make sounds (e.g. 'woof', 'brmm'), letting your baby see your face when you make the sounds.

## TALK

It is never too soon to talk to your baby! They learn from your example and need to hear you talking. Talk anywhere... on the bus, in the car, walking along, during meals and at bath time.

Share what you are doing. **Use facial expressions** and make your voice tuneful to make it interesting for your baby. Follow your baby's lead and talk about what he/she is interested in. **Copy his/her sounds** then wait so he/she can have another turn to try a sound or 'word' in the conversation.

Sing and chat to your baby. Babies love nursery rhymes, especially action songs, rhymes and tickling games (e.g. 'Round and round the garden', 'Twinkle twinkle'). This will help them develop good listening and talking skills.

Encourage your baby to take turns with talking. **When they make a noise or smile, you smile and say something back.** You need to let your baby have a chance to respond, so give them time to make another noise as you keep looking and smiling at them. Spend some special time together each day when you and your baby can **enjoy talking and playing together.**



**Remember...** always use the language **you** feel most comfortable with when talking together.

Further advice or information is available from your local speech and language therapist, health visitor or Children's Centre.

## Did you know?

You are your child's favourite toy and they enjoy listening to your voice more than anyone else's!

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**Info & contacts...**

**“Let children be children.  
A skilled five year  
old grows from a  
busy four year old, a  
curious three year old,  
a cuddled two year  
old, an adventurous  
one year old and a  
communicative baby.”**

**Jenny Lindon**

Babies – learning starts from the  
first day. Early Education.

‘Talk and Play Every Day’ are a series  
of leaflets written and developed  
by Guy’s & St Thomas’ Children &  
Young People’s Community Speech  
& Language Therapy Service