

Baby talk: How to encourage baby's first words.

Your baby's first words are likely to happen after a few months of baby talk. It's an exciting time for you both as your little one starts to verbalize their wonder at the world—just prepare yourself for the torrent of questions that will follow soon after! Here are some things you can do to help teach your baby to talk.

- Try to teach your baby to talk about the things you see and do.
- Describe things as you're doing them (I'm cooking dinner, I'm calling daddy, I'm packing your bag).
- Aim to read to your child every day and describe pictures in books too.
- Sing and act out songs and nursery rhymes to make learning words fun.
- Try to expand on what your child is saying, for example if they say "dog" you can say "Yes it's a black dog"
- Let your toddler clearly see your face and mouth when you're speaking so they can copy the shapes your lips and mouth make.
- Ask them to make choices like "apple or orange" to encourage them to speak rather than point.
- Repeat words back to them correctly, but don't focus on their mistake.
- Turn off the radio, TV, or tablet so there are fewer distractions, and you can spend time focusing on talking to each other.

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