

Small Talk

Copying babble & shaping babble into words

Sounds like "dada", "baba", "mama" will eventually form the basis of first words. Sometimes parents respond to their baby by reshaping babble into words e.g. baby says, "dada!" when looking at their teddy bear, parent responds, "teddy".

When your bay babbles either copy what he/she says or try to reshape it into real words that are appropriate to the situation.

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When a parent reshapes their baby's babble into real words it gives the baby the opportunity to hear new sounds and then to practise these new sounds, matching them with those produced by the adult.

By reshaping your baby's babble you are giving your baby the opportunity to hear new sounds. Remember to leave pauses so that your baby has the time and opportunity to practise making these new sounds.

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Small Talk

Sharing attention

As babies grow older they begin to be more aware of when they and their parents are focusing on the same object or activity – this is shared or joint attention.

As your baby gets bigger try to notice when he/she is able to follow your line of vision or pointing gestures.

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Sharing attention

Babies begin to attach meaning to sounds when parents match their language to the shared focus of attention.

Comment on the activity or objects that are capturing you and your baby's attention.

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Small Talk

Keeping language simple

When talking to older babies parents now begin to use shorter sentence length is more manageable for the baby's limited attention span and simplifies the task of learning words and language.

As your baby grows and starts to explore the world more actively try to use simple language and short sentences.

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Keeping language simple

As babies grow older and begin to take a more active interest in their world they will enjoy nursery rhymes and action songs.

To help encourage your baby's attention and eye contact play baby games and rhymes every day: any game that includes an element of surprise or fun works well.

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Small Talk

Hearing aids and cochlear implants

Try to ensure that your baby continues to wear hearing aids or a cochlear implant all day long – this can be a challenge with an inquisitive baby who is eager to explore every object he/she can get his/her hands on.

The art of distraction is certainly a skill that you will need to learn – persistence and a sense of humor are vital!

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Encouraging attention and eye contact

Encourage your baby's attention and eye contact by using natural gesture to support your spoken language.

Play baby games and rhymes every day – every family has their own favourite. Babies love games such as peek-a-boo or round and round the garden – any game that includes an element of surprise or fun works well – why not try to make up your own game.

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