

the early years toolkit

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Babble 1

By nine months a baby would usually be babbling with reduplicated sounds e.g. babababa, dadadada. They will show pleasure in babbling loudly and tunefully and may copy other sounds like lip-smacking or coughing.

Gradually these sounds become more varied, and some are shortened towards more word-like vocalisations e.g. mama; dada; nana; uh (up); oo-oo (train); goh (gone).

If your baby seems quite quiet, try a few of the following ideas to stimulate your baby's babbling:

- Share books with your baby using key phrases and sounds e.g. here's the duck – quack, quack and pause to see if your baby joins in with the sound too
- Sing nursery rhymes with these sounds in e.g. Old MacDonald and make the sounds of the animals as you look at animal toys or pictures, again pausing to see if your child joins in
- Try nursery rhymes which have simple actions e.g. twinkle twinkle little star, round and round the garden and pause for your baby to join in with vocalisation or gesture
- Make sounds in play that they may join in with e.g. /ah/ to cuddle a teddy; /oo/ I wonder what's in there; /mm/ lovely ice-cream; /brm/ here comes the car
- Take turns in play with sounds e.g. banging a drum, saying bang-bang, then pause to give your baby a turn and see if they copy what you did or said. Other ideas are sounds as you build ring stackers or soft blocks or when posting shapes. Use sounds like 'whee' or 'oh' or 'bye' as things disappear. Try 'pop, pop, pop' for the bubbles
- Where your baby is showing you by gestures they want something e.g. arms up, add in the word 'up' each time and then pause to see if they join in. The same can be done for upstairs, up/down on knees/seesaw or building soft blocks up and knocking down.
- Try with counting up/down the stairs where your baby may join in with

sounds for the rhythm of the counting and movement

- Exaggerate within situations using sounds and facial expression e.g. poo-wee (smelly sock), peek-a-boo (surprised face), using hello/bye bye as things appear and disappear again pausing to give your baby a chance to take a turn
- Copy sounds and gestures your baby makes when they are watching you.
- Try taking turns with the sounds they make where you copy them, then wait, they take a turn, then you again and so on. Sounds to try include vowels e.g. ah, oo, ee, oh, a, i, e and early consonants e.g. b, m, n, d, g
- This time, when it's your turn try a different sound and see if they copy the new one or stay with their own sound
- Use a phone to hold and see if your baby will 'babble' as though talking. Try making sounds in a tube (kitchen roll tube) or in an echoey room (bathroom) and see if your baby joins in.

Remember:

Sounds are learnt and used through copying and repetition. You might find that your baby needs to hear the sounds and ideas many times over before they start to join in. It is difficult to know which sounds they might respond to first, so try a few ideas from those suggested to see which appeal to them.