

HELPING YOUR BABY TO TALK

Babies begin to learn language skills from the moment they are born, by listening and watching, playing with sounds and talking to others.

Communication milestones can vary between babies, but most will follow a natural progression of building their speech and language skills.



Talk to your baby and make sure you reply to the sounds they make! These are important attempts at language.

Milestones for communication (5-14 months)



5 - 7 months

Copy some of the sounds and gestures you make, like laughing and waving



8 - 9 months

Put together sounds with rhythm and tone, Say "mama" or "dada" *but may not know what they mean



10 - 11 months

Communicate using noises or gestures. They may try to ask for something, say no or greet someone



12 - 14 months

May say a few words and know what they mean



Speech development for your baby

Babies learn new words by repeated exposure in different scenarios. They first listen and understand; then express the newly learnt words in speech.

You can help develop your baby's language skills by talking, watching, listening, playing and sharing books with your baby.

How to help your baby learn these skills

Play games like peek-a-boo. Waving "hi" and then "bye" when you disappear.

This helps your baby understand the meaning of words and engage in conversations.



If you speak another language at home, talk and sing songs to your baby in your language.



Sing songs and nursery rhymes. Songs with hand motions are best. Encourage your baby to use their hands and sing along when they can.

Read books and enjoy the pictures together, talk about what you see. Limit other noises i.e. TV



Babies learn better without pressure. Move at their pace and ask them engaging questions.

Showing pictures of familiar people and repeating their names helps your baby start to recognise faces and names. They might even start to say them!

Chat to your baby. Respond to their sounds and encourage their attempts at language.

You have lots to tell me today!

If you have any concerns about your child, contact your local [Child and Family Health Nurse service](#), [Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Service \(AMIHS\)](#), [Building Strong Foundations \(BSF\) for Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities](#), or GP.



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District



HNEkidshealth
Children, Young People & Families



Healthy Beginnings for HNEkids acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, live and gather, recognising their continuing connection to land, water and community.

We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging, as well as Aboriginal people who have provided valuable guidance to the development of this project.