



Baby Talk

Understanding your Baby's Communication

Babies communicate by crying. But babies also communicate in other ways. They try to copy your smile and the sound of your voice.

They wave their arms and legs when they are excited, happy, or angry. They stare at things they want. Babies try to communicate in a lot of ways. They communicate more when their parents respond and talk to them.

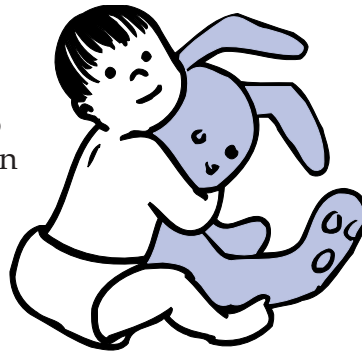
During the first year, babies develop language skills quickly. There are many things you can do to help your baby learn to communicate.

The ages below are only general guidelines.

Birth to One Month

At first your baby may...

- cry if uncomfortable
- cough, hiccup, or sneeze
- make sounds at the back of the mouth (like 'g' or 'k')
- move his/her tongue in and out of the mouth



One to Four Months

At this age your baby may...

- make sounds like 'aw', and 'oo'
- make happy cooing sounds
- copy smiles
- join two sounds such as 'awg', 'ung', or 'ook'
- stare back at you as you talk
- move his/her tongue
- develop strong lips by sucking and smiling
- hold sounds longer (may sound like singing)



Four to Eight Months

At this age your baby may...

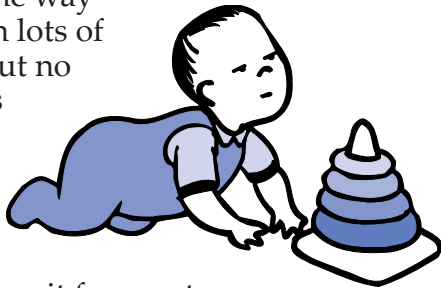
- babble sounds like 'baba', and 'mama'
- use mostly vowel sounds such as 'ah', 'oh', 'ee', 'oo', 'uh', and 'iii'
- make some consonant sounds at the front of the mouth, such as 't', 'd', 'n', and 'm'
- squeal, growl, and yell
- blow bubbles and "raspberries"
- try to copy what you say
- begin to sit up, breathe more deeply, and make louder sounds
- be more aware of his/her mouth and tongue because of mouthing objects and chewing



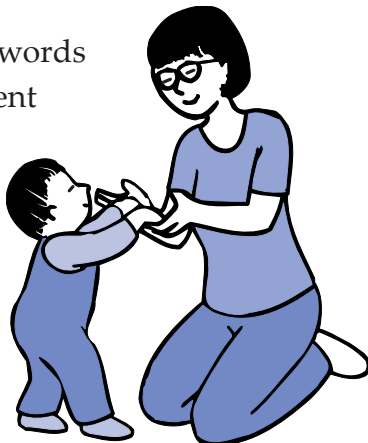
Seven to Twelve Months

At this age your baby may...

- try to copy the way you talk with lots of expression but no “real” words
- play ‘peek-a-boo’ and ‘pat-a-cake’
- point to pictures and wait for you to name the picture



- understand a few words
- make many different sounds
- repeat syllables (such as ma ma ma, buh buh, da da da)
- say his/her first “real” word
- talk less while beginning to walk



Twelve to Eighteen Months

At this age your child may...

- say 5 - 20 words
- understand simple directions
- know his/her own name
- point to his/her nose, eyes, mouth, and hands
- like songs and rhymes
- point and make sounds to ask for things
- string sounds together like a sentence with no “real” words



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Other fact sheets on parenting your toddler are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>

For more information, contact a Speech- Language Pathologist or Public Health Nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health
www.vch.ca

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