



Talking Tips

*Handouts for physicians
and other professionals
(based on pediatric well-child visit schedules)*

by Karen K. Rossi
www.learntotalkaroundtheclock.com

Congratulations! You have a new baby to care for and love. What can you do to welcome your baby home?

- Keep your baby close to make her feel secure. Remember that your baby probably recognizes your voice because the hearing system is fully formed and functioning at twenty weeks into the pregnancy. Quietly talking to your baby will comfort her.
- When your baby is awake, hold your baby face-to-face so you can learn everything about her and all the funny little faces she makes. Sing to her. Tell her Nursery Rhymes. Tell her about your day. Read her a book. Talk to your baby about her little wiggles, sounds and smiles.
- Rock your baby, walk with your baby, and talk or sing to your baby while you do.
- Read simple books to your baby when she wants to play. Seat her in a bouncy seat so she can gaze at the pictures while she listens to your voice.
- When you hold your baby face-to-face, your baby is also watching and listening to you. She is learning about you and your funny faces! But most of all, your baby is learning to love and trust you.
- Take advantage of other times when you are face-to-face with your baby. While diapering and dressing your baby, talk to her about what you are doing. "Little baby, you have a wet diaper! You are all wet! Mommy will change your diaper. Here is a dry diaper. That feels better." Talk to your baby about putting her shirt over her head, and her arms in the sleeves. Talk to her about zipping her jammies or snapping her sleeper.
- Believe it or not, all of these face-to-face times with your baby not only help her feel safe, secure and loved, but they also set the foundation for good language and vocabulary development, and eventually reading! Yes! You are making it easier for your baby to learn to read a few short years from now.

Enjoy your baby now. Babies grow up so fast. Sometimes it seems they grow and change right before your eyes.





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You can help your child develop speech and language as you go about your daily routines. You can do this without adding more time to your already busy schedule by talking to your baby as you interact together. Previously in this series of Talking Tips, you learned to respond to your baby, create opportunities for joint attention, name his actions, label his toys and other possessions, and create models or examples of what your child could say. By continuing to do all these things, you are helping your child become ready for kindergarten by developing good listening and spoken language and a great vocabulary. Here's another talking tip. Let's learn how to "narrate" your child's activities.

- Narrate or describe your child's actions as you engage in activities with your child. Let's imagine that you are going to fold a basket of freshly dried towels. "Mommy will dump the basket on the bed. Feel the towels. The towels are soft and warm. Do you want to wrap up in the towel? Mommy wraps the towel around you. You are snuggly and warm. Now, Mommy will fold the other towels. Here are the washcloths for you to fold. Do you remember how? Mommy will fold a washcloth with you. You are folding the washcloth in half. Now fold the washcloth in half again. Great job! Now find another washcloth in the pile. You found one. You are folding the washcloth. Such a big helper!"
- Narrate your own actions as you get your baby ready for bed. "It's time for your bath. Mommy turned on the water. Mommy will check the water. Is it too hot? No. The water is warm. It is just right! Mommy is washing your face. Uh, oh! I got soap on your nose! Mommy is washing your hair. Look at all the bubbles. I'm pouring water on your hair. Rinse, rinse, rinse your hair. The soap is all gone." Make up little tunes to put to your talk. Kids love it!
- You can narrate your baby's actions as he plays with his cars. "Push your car. Push your car under the chair. Whee! Your car is going fast! Uh, oh! What should we do? Your car is stuck."
- You can narrate your baby's actions as you make shapes together with play dough. "You will make a play dough shape. We will use Mommy's cookie cutters to make the shapes. Push down on the cookie cutter. You made a heart shape. Will you eat it? No! It is just for pretending. You can make another shape. Oh, you want the round one. You will make a circle."
- You can also narrate your actions and your baby's actions—alternating these descriptions naturally during any activity. "Your teddy bear is hungry. Do you want to feed him? Oh, good, you found the milk bottle. Teddy Bear wants milk. What else does Teddy Bear want to eat? Teddy Bear wants cheese crackers. Okay. Mommy will get the cheese crackers. Here is a bowl. Can you put some cheese crackers in the bowl? Will you pour them? Okay. You are pouring the crackers into the bowl. That's enough. Teddy will share his crackers with you."

Remember to match your talk with what your child is "thinking" and trying to say. It is very loving and fun for a child to have a special person be with him and talk about what he does. Be that special person as much as you can.

