



Let's Talk

Helping Your Child Learn to Listen and Talk

“ We just had our first baby, Brandon. I feel silly talking to him, when he can't talk back. I don't like to use baby talk. What should I say to help him? ”

—Claudia

How Can I Help My Child?

Children learn to listen and talk at different rates. Your child is learning a lot from the time he is born. Your child will understand many words before he can say them. It's important to let him listen to you.

If you speak more than one language, it will not confuse your child. Children are very good at learning languages. Speak to your child in both languages to help him learn.

Talk a lot to your child. Reading also helps your child learn new words and ideas. Read large, colorful books. Point to pictures as you talk about them. Ask your child, “What's this?”

Here are some more tips that you can do at home as your child grows:

Is Your Child Younger Than 2 Years Old?

- Look at your child when you talk.
- Imitate your child's squeals, sounds, and the faces she makes. Ask your child questions even when she doesn't understand.
- Try to get your child to do what you do. Clap your hands, wave good-bye, and blow kisses.
- Sing songs to your child.

Is Your Child 2 to 4 Years Old?

- Ask him questions with a yes or no answer, like “Can a pig fly?”
- Ask questions with a choice, like “Do you want an apple or an orange?”
- Name colors, body parts, animals, and objects. For example, say, “This is your nose. You smell flowers with your nose.” If you are

Fast facts

- All children do not learn to listen and talk at the same exact age.
- You can help your child learn to listen and talk.
- Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, can help when children have problems with listening and talking.

teaching your child to be bilingual, use words from both languages.

- Repeat the words he says and add more. If your child says “want juice”, you can say “I want apple juice.”
- Sing songs and say nursery rhymes. This shows your child the rhythm of speech.
- Show photos of people and places he knows. Make up a story about the pictures.

“house.” You be the child and let your child play the parent. Talk about objects in the house and what you do with them.

- Ask your child to guess a word. Give clues: “We use it to cut our meat” (knife) or “It is cold, sweet, and a good dessert” (ice cream).
- Talk to your child about TV shows. Watch and talk about them together. Talk about the characters. Ask your child to guess what happens.

Is Your Child 4 to 6 Years Old?

- Help your child follow simple directions, such as “Go to your room and bring me your book.” Ask her to give you directions, like “What should I put in the cake?”
- Tell your child what new words mean.
- Talk about words to show direction, like right and left.
- Talk about words that help tell a story—first, middle, and last. Play games with her like

How Can I Get Help?

It takes time to learn language. Give your child lots of time to practice. Have fun talking together and getting to know your child. Be sure to listen to what he has to say. If you have concerns about your child’s speech and language development, a speech-language pathologist, or SLP, can help. The earlier your child gets help, the better.

“ I had no idea how much Brandon would enjoy reading! He’s only 8 months old but loves to look at the pictures. Reading time is my favorite time of the day! ” —Claudia

You can help your child learn to listen and talk.

To learn more about speech and language development or disorders or to find an SLP near you who has been certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), visit www.asha.org or call 800-638-8255 or (TTY) 301-296-5650.

My SLP’s name is

Appointment

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and