

Baby

WORD builders



Sing with Me

You don't have to have a great voice to sing with your baby! Songs are a great way to help her build words. Think of some simple songs that you remember from your childhood, or make up new ones. Try using the tune from "Mary Had a Little Lamb" or "Jingle Bells" and put in your own words. For example:

**Mary is going to take a bath,
take a bath, take a bath!
Mary is going to take a bath
so she will be so clean!**

You can keep adding to your song as long as your baby is interested:

**Mommy is washing Mary's feet,
Mary's feet, Mary's feet!
Mommy is washing Mary's feet,
and now they are so clean.**

You can sing during daily routines like bathing, diapering and feeding, or hold your baby and sway to the rhythm of the music together.

Songs will help your baby recognize the routines that are so important to her sense of security. You are also teaching common words and actions in a fun way!



Everyday Reading

Find a book with big, bright pictures, or make a book of your own by taking photographs of your family or by cutting out pictures from a magazine or newspaper and gluing them to pieces of paper. Read the book with your baby, by pointing to the picture and saying what it is. Help your baby point to the picture, and talk about it,

Look, here is your Grandma.

She is wearing a pretty blue dress.

She has brown hair.

You can make reading part of every day – at bath times, at bed times, in a car, or in a waiting room.

Your baby is learning new words.



Keep Talking

When your baby makes sounds, like blowing bubbles, cooing, or babbling, or makes face or body gestures, he is experimenting with language. These are his first tries at having a conversation with you! Have some fun trying to guess what your baby is saying. When he says,

Oooh or Gagaga,

respond as if he just told you something very important! Look him in the eye and say something back like,

**That is a very good idea! or
What happened next?**

Give him several seconds to respond in any way. It may be with a sound or by moving his body or by making a face. He will follow up with another sound, and will begin to maintain eye contact with you. It may feel silly at first, but you will soon become comfortable with the special language you develop!

Your baby is learning that he is able to use sounds to communicate with the people around him. While babies need loving touch at this age, combine it with talking! The more words babies hear, the better they will use language as children.



Talk About Your World!

Pick a room where your baby spends a lot of time. Take her around to different objects in the room, close enough so she can see or touch them. A very young baby will like to be carried and to hear your voice and have you speak directly to her. An older baby will like to touch the different objects (if it is safe), maybe again and again. Have a “shared” conversation, even if your baby’s part is simply cooing or blowing tiny bubbles. For example say: **Here is your crib. It is made of wood. It is smooth and cold when you touch it. Here is the carpet. It feels rough. It’s brown. This is the wall. It is bumpy too.** Give your baby a chance to respond. If your baby looks away from you, she may be getting tired or too stimulated. This is your cue to stop talking.

One of the best ways to help your baby learn to talk is to talk to and with her – about everything, and all the time.



Animal Sounds

Many animal sounds are easy for children to say, such as baa-baa, moo-moo, and neigh-neigh. Go to the library or bookstore and find a children's book with big, bright pictures of animals. Look through this book with your baby, and point to each animal. As you point to the animal, make the noise that the animal makes, and see if your baby will copy you. Say:

**What sound does a cow make?
Moo. Moo.**

See if your baby will copy the sounds, and eventually make the sound on his own when you point to the picture. As your baby grows, he can learn the names of the animals too.

Learning about animal names and noises is a fun way for your baby to practice more sounds and words.



Rhyming

Babies love rhymes and songs. Build your baby's words by using simple rhymes. She will enjoy the rhythm and lots of expression in your voice. You can use rhymes you remember from your childhood, or make up short silly rhymes for your baby. For example:

We have a cat.

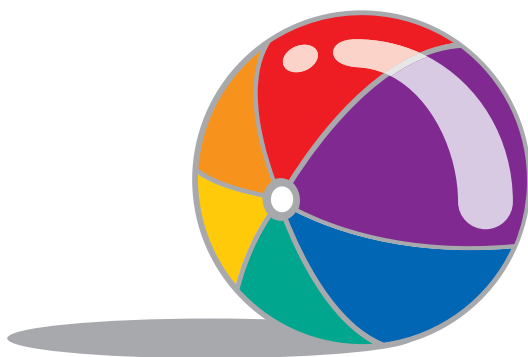
She's very fat.

She ate a rat.

Think of that!

Make the rhyme simple so that you can repeat it over and over again to your baby. Make it a silly rhyme so that you can laugh together at the funny words.

Using words that rhyme and repeating them over and over helps your baby learn about sounds that are the same, an early skill for reading and writing.



My Picture Wall

Look through magazines and family albums for simple, colorful pictures of objects and people that might interest your baby. Choose a wall or bulletin board and tape the pictures up. Try to pick a place that he sees often such as the space above his crib, changing table, or toy shelf. Make a habit of pointing to the pictures at least once a day, and name the item in the picture such as Grandma or car. As he gets older, he may point to the items himself and look at you, waiting to hear you say the word. You can then ask him:

Where is Grandma?

and watch to see if he looks at, or points to, the right picture.

Your baby began building his vocabulary in his first few weeks of life. This activity will support his growing language.

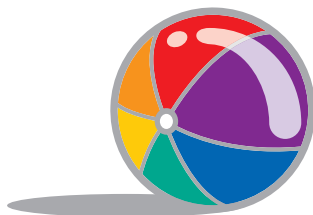




Traffic Jam!

Chances are, sometime you will find yourself stuck in traffic with your baby in the car. As frustrating as that can be, it is also a great opportunity to play fun Word Builder games with her! Point out things that you pass on the road (big trucks, balloons, motorcycles, flags) or sing simple songs. If you are not the driver, you can use this time to read simple books, play Peek-a-Boo, or just talk with her.

Taking advantage of these extra moments with your baby will help pass the time and help your baby grow! She will learn to observe the world around her and learn words for things that she might not see at home.



Hello?

Your baby often sees you talking on the phone and will soon show interest in holding it and touching the buttons. Find an old phone receiver or a toy plastic phone for your baby to experiment with. When he picks it up, say “Hello?” and hold your phone to your ear. Think about how you sound when you are on the telephone talking to friends or family and try to copy your tone of voice and sentences. You will notice that your baby will start to copy the way that your voice rises and falls when you are talking, even if he isn’t saying real words yet. You might let him “talk” to family members when they call. He will enjoy hearing their voices and they will love hearing his early coos and sounds!



Talking on the phone is another fun way to encourage your baby to use his growing language skills to communicate. This is an activity he will enjoy for years to come!



Hide and Seek

How many times do you find yourself looking for a lost object around your house? This activity includes your baby and turns an everyday activity into a word-building game. The next time you need to get something in another room, pick up your baby and say:

Where are my keys?
(or glasses, or baby wipes)

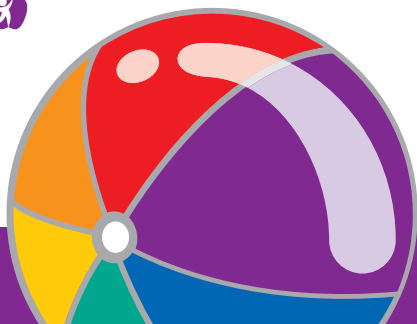
in a loud, clear voice. As you walk through the house, pick up items and say:

Are these my keys?
No! These are books!
How about this?
Are these Mommy's keys?
No. This is a ball!

When you finally find your lost item, say:

Are these my keys?
Yes! Here are my keys!
We found them!

Your baby is hearing words and seeing the objects that go with them. She is learning the names of common items around the house while also learning to look for things that have been lost.



Notes