



SpeechWise

Understanding Speech, Language, and Communication Needs

0-6 Months

Sometimes we can forget babies can still communicate even though they can't talk.

Right from being born your baby will be communicating with you. Here are some things you can look out for that might be signs that your baby's communication is developing differently, be sure to talk to your health visitor about any concerns.



What to expect	Signs to watch for	How you can help
• Notices sounds in the environment • Watches your face and eyes when you talk to them • Coos, babbles and squeals to themselves, and to get your attention • Smiles and laughs when others smile and laugh	• Does not turn their attention to sounds / noises in the environment • Does not watch your face and eyes when you talk to them • Does not look at you when you talk to them • Does not smile back at others	• Talk to your child often • Sing nursery rhymes • Make babble sounds and pause to encourage your child to make sounds back to you. This will help your child learn to take turns. • Play games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake

Find out more at: www.speechandlanguage.org.uk

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6-12 Months

Babies typically start to communicate more in these months and are working hard to get ready to start speaking. As with every other area of development, communication develops at different rates and in different ways. Your health visitor will be able to help you if you're concerned about your baby's communication.



What to expect	Signs to watch for	How you can help
• Notices sounds in the environment • Babbles in strings like 'ma-ma' or 'na-na' • Gets your attention by making sounds, pointing and looking • Begins to understand simple words like 'bye bye' • Looks at you when you say their name • Shows excitement when you sing and do actions	• Gets your attention by making sounds, pointing and looking • Does not respond to sounds in the environment • Does not point to people, things or objects • Does not make noises, use eye contact or facial expression or reach or something in order to gain attention	• Sing songs and rhymes • Babble back and forth with your child to encourage turn-taking • Use gesture like waving and encourage your child to do it back • Repeatedly name and label people and objects in the room while you're talking to your child • Talk to your child often and describe what you're doing like, 'I'm making your bottle now'

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12-18 Months

The age when children often begin to say their first words but don't worry if your child hasn't said their first word yet - some children just need more time, talking is a complicated thing after all.



What to expect	Signs to watch for	How you can help
• Enjoys looking at picture books and listening to songs • Understands more words like everyday items, and some question words like, 'where's dolly?' • Babbles and says single words in play • Enjoys pretend play like putting teddy to sleep • Copies more of your actions and words • Uses pointing, actions or words to get attention	• Does not babble by 12-15 months • Has not said their first words by 18 months • Does not seem to show understanding of what you say by 18 months • Understands more words like names of everyday items, and some question words like, 'where's dolly?'	• Model clear, simple language like, 'baby eat' or 'baby sleep' • Praise all efforts to communicate – if they say 'ba' for 'ball', you respond by saying, 'Yes, ball. Roll ball.' • Repeatedly name objects around you • Follow your child's lead in play by doing the sounds and actions that they do

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18-24 Months

Your little one will typically be talking by the time they are 2. If they aren't talk to the health visitor at the 2 year check as they will be able to give you advice about what to do next. Try not to worry and keep encouraging them to communicate in anyway they can.



What to expect	Signs to watch for	How you can help
• Sits and listens to simple stories • Understands around 200 words, including action words like 'sing' or 'sleep' • Says around 50 simple words though they may be unclear at times	• Cannot follow simple instructions like, 'put it down' • Cannot say 25 simple words	• Follow your child's lead in play and comment on what they are interested in • Model simple sentences and reduce the number of questions you ask • Offer your child choices and wait for them to respond • Respond to all communication efforts from your child

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