

Supporting Language & Literacy

9 Months: Building vocabulary through play & repetition

Learning how to talk is not a passive process. Babies learn language by playing with it. Their mouths must practice forming sounds and put those sounds together to form words and sentences. They need to imitate you several times and they need lots of feedback. To learn language, they need you! When it comes to your baby learning language, no electronic device or app can replace your lap.

Tips & Activities



Pair words or simple sound patterns with gestures, e.g. *clapping* or saying “*ba-ba-ba*” to encourage your child to utilize consonant sounds.



Play peek-a-boo



Grocery Store Explore:
Point out and tell baby about what all you see & are shopping for

Repeat baby’s sounds and say a word using the sound—baby says “*baba*,” when they see a bottle → you say, “*Yes. Baba. Bottle.*”



Describe what baby is looking at or playing with

Use new words many times and in different contexts.

Common Language Milestones



Recognizes simple requests, their name, and names of familiar people & objects

Shows interest with gestures (*pointing, lifting arms to be picked up*) & sounds

Uses an increased variety of sounds, e.g. *mamama, upupup, or bababa*

Copies sounds and gestures of others, e.g. *shaking head for “no”*

Participates in games like peek-a-boo & pat-a-cake

Participates in two-way communication

Early Detection *is* Intervention

Your child is always learning! As a caregiver, you have an amazing opportunity to guide them on a path to success.

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Talk with your child's healthcare provider if your child:

Is unresponsive to sounds or voices

Does not maintain eye contact during playful interaction

Is not interested in interacting with others

Does not babble

Does not respond to own name

Source: pathways.org

Additional Resources

[Pathways: Communication](#)

[Harvard University: Center on the Developing Child](#)

[Cox Campus](#)

[The Basics](#)

[CDC Milestones](#)