

# TALK



**Talking with a young child is one of the most important things a parent can do. Simple back-and-forth conversation is important for brain structure and function, reading skills, and socio-emotional development.**

**Talk to and with your baby, allow for the child's response and respond with interest.**

**Your facial expressions, body language and words will show your child that you're interested in what they are doing and communicating.**

## **TALK FROM THE BEGINNING.**

Babies learn to communicate by watching your face and your mouth, they are born ready to learn to communicate.

## **FACE TO FACE.**

Chat with your baby about what you are doing while you are changing their nappy or clothes, giving them a bath, feeding, or when having a cuddle.

## **HOME LANGUAGE.**

Talk in the language that you are comfortable with. Babies need to hear fluent speech to learn the sounds and words they will be using when they start to speak.

## **LISTEN AND REPEAT.**

Babies need to make a range of sounds and use these before they are developmentally ready to talk. Make sounds together throughout the day.

## **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!**

Babies and toddlers need time to practice new skills. The more words a child hears, the more they will know, understand and later use.

**WORDS GROW MINDS**

Learn more at  
[wordsgrowminds.org.au](https://www.wordsgrowminds.org.au)

# PLAY



**Play may look simple but your baby or toddler is learning so much – just playing shops allows them to explore imagination, maths, social and sharing skills, and new words. Play is crucial to building pathways or “neurons” in the brain.**

**Parents are a child’s first teacher and there is so much that children can do at home to follow their interests, have fun and learn new skills.**

**Play can happen anywhere, and it’s the process that matters to a child, not the finished product.**

#### **FAVOURITE TOY... IS YOU!**

Babies and toddlers adore playing with the people who love and care for them. You are absolutely their best and favourite toy!

#### **ALONE AND WITH FRIENDS.**

Give children time to play alone, and with friends and family. Being social helps children practice turn taking, communication and entering and exiting play situations.

#### **REPEAT FOR PRACTICE.**

Practice new skills over and over. Watch the laughter on children’s faces when they build, knock over and re-build a tower.

#### **TALK IN PLAY.**

Take time to talk with children about what they are doing in their play and ask thought-provoking questions.

#### **EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS.**

Satisfy children’s natural love and need for movement and exploration. Encourage crawling, climbing, running, playing in sandpits, using playdough, dancing, playing with water. Stay together and connect.

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# READ



**WORDS GROW MINDS**

**Reading aloud builds nurturing relationships, stimulates brain growth and encourages language skills.**

**Children who have someone read to them every day when they are very young learn to speak, read and write more easily.**

**Sharing stories can be lots of fun and introduces children to new words and sounds. It's never too early (or too late) to start!**

**SNUGGLE UP.**

Hold your baby or position yourself close, so your baby can see your face and the book.

**FOLLOW THEIR LEAD.**

You don't have to read the words. Describe the pictures, ask questions, wonder and imagine together.

**READ IT AGAIN.**

Read your child's favourites often.

**READ REGULARLY.**

Aim for 15 minutes a day. Try 5 minutes in the morning, in the afternoon and at bedtime. It all counts!

**USE YOUR HOME LANGUAGE.**

Always use the language you are most comfortable with. The more you read, the more the child's language will grow.

**HAVE FUN.**

Use different voices and facial expressions, change the tone as you read – be playful!

**VISIT THE LIBRARY.**

Join - it's free! Spend time choosing books, reading together or join a free Storytime session!

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# SING



**Singing is a gentle way to bond with babies. Listening to music and singing helps babies and toddlers learn to regulate their emotions and gather information about their world.**

**A mix of traditional and favourite trending songs helps babies develop a love of music and build their speech and language.**

**LOVE YOUR VOICE.**

Your baby needs to hear your voice and they won't mind if you are making up the words or out of tune.

**FACE TO FACE.**

Babies and toddlers watch your face closely when singing. This is how they learn to make sounds and words, and they'll soon start copying you.

**SLOW IT DOWN.**

When we sing we naturally slow down our speech. This helps babies hear each sound while having fun singing and enjoying music.

**SING ANYWHERE!**

Sing with your baby while eating, bathing, walking, playing or driving.

**REPETITION IS KEY.**

Go ahead, sing their favourite song for the hundredth time, it is actually building strong brain connections!

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