

Especially for parents of infants!

Babble On

Vocalizing and Listening

Not long after infants make a lot of cooing sounds, they start to try to make babbling sounds. Making the same consonants over and over (*ba-ba-ba, da-da-da, ga-ga-ga, ma-ma-ma-ma*) is called babbling. As infants get good at babbling, they often try putting different sounds together (*da-ga-ba, ba-mi-ma*).

What is the practice?

This practice simply involves repeating your infant's babbling sounds as part of your everyday play with her. Your baby will learn that she can get you to respond to what she is saying. While talking to your child, start to change the sounds you make after her babbling. This will catch her interest and get her to try new sounds. You can do this just about anytime when your child is awake and alert.

What does the practice look like?

A father holds his son so that they're facing each other. Dad lifts his son and asks, "How is my little man doing today? Can you say hello to Da-da?" Any time his son makes a sound, Dad repeats it and waits to see what his son does next. They go back and forth "talking" to each other. Dad changes how he responds to see what his son will do. When Dad says something different, his son looks at him and tries his hardest to copy Dad's sounds.



How do you do the practice?

Here are some simple ways to get your baby to babble and to try to make new babbling sounds.

- Getting your child to babble and "talk" to you is more likely to happen during face-to-face interactions.
- Vocal play activities should be ones that your child enjoys and finds interesting. The idea is to create a situation where vocal play occurs naturally.
- Imitate your child any time she makes babbling sounds or any other sounds.
- Make a babbling sound that your child already makes to see if she will repeat it. Lap games and vocal play activities are great times to try this.
- Introduce new babbling sounds into parent-baby play and watch to see what your child does. Imitate what she says and then repeat any new sounds she makes.
- Have fun! Show your enjoyment! The more your child sees you're pleased, the more likely she will feel excited too.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child repeat the sounds that you both make?
- Does your child try to make new babbling sounds?
- Does your child use babbling sounds to get your attention?

Take a look at more of baby's babbling fun

Say It Again, Daddy!

Taylor and her father are playing together on the floor with her favorite toys and stuffed animals. Dad describes what 8-month-old Taylor is doing. He talks to her about all that is going on. Dad uses animal sounds like *baa-baa* and *moo-moo* while playing with toy animals. He asks Taylor to say the sounds. She tries her best to repeat what her dad says. Whatever she says (for example, *maa-maa* for *moo-moo*), her father repeats the sounds. This gets Taylor to say it again. This back-and-forth play is a favorite activity for Taylor. She watches, listens, and tries to repeat the sounds her dad makes.



Happy Talk!

A few months have passed since 14-month-old Brynna has learned to say *da-da*, *ga-ga*, *ba-ba*, and other babbling sounds. She loves to just lie in her crib after waking, repeating everything she can say over and over. Brynna's mother plays a sound game with her when she goes into her room to pick her up. She looks at Brynna and says, "Has Brynna been talking again? What are you saying?" This excites her baby and she starts babbling again. Mom repeats the sounds while talking about what her daughter is doing. ("You are so good at saying *ba-ba*. Say *ba-ba* again!") After three or four back-and-forth bouts of talking, Mom asks, "Can you say *ga-ga*, *ga-ga*?" Brynna tries to repeat the sounds. She doesn't always get it right, but she seems pleased with her effort.

Play Prompts Babbling

Amber is 9 months old. Her mother has found fun ways to help her daughter babble as part of games they play together. Amber has difficulties with muscle strength and especially her facial muscles which makes it hard for her to make sounds. Mom has solved this problem by helping her daughter to babble on! One game they play is *Mouth Patting*. Mom gently pats Amber's mouth while saying *ma-ma-ma* or some other babbling sound. This gets her daughter to make the same or similar sounds each time her mouth is patted. When Mom stops, Amber gets excited and starts moving her lips to tell Mom to "do it again." Amber's mother tries different babbling sounds each time the game is played. Her daughter does her best to repeat the sounds.

