

Infant Language Development Activities

From birth to 3 months

1. Talk to your baby

Regularly talk to your baby about your day, emotions, or actions. The sound of your voice helps them begin to understand communication.

2. Sing songs

Sing simple nursery rhymes and lullabies to introduce your baby to the musicality of language.

3. Imitate sounds

Make cooing and babbling noises and pause to give your baby a chance to respond, fostering early conversational skills.

Expected milestones

- Reacts to familiar voices.
 - Coos and makes pleasure sounds.
 - Begins to babble.
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From 4 to 6 months

1. Read aloud

Use picture books with large, colorful images to capture your baby's attention while you describe the pictures in simple phrases.

2. Expand responses

When your baby makes sounds, respond as if they are conversing with you. This teaches turn-taking in communication.

3. Use gestures

Incorporate gestures like waving goodbye, pointing, and nodding while you speak to help associate actions with words.

Expected milestones

- Babbles with expression.
 - Laughs and squeals.
 - Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure.
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From 7 to 9 months

1. Name objects

Consistently name common objects during daily routines to build your baby's vocabulary. For example, say "bottle" when you give them their bottle.

2. Play interactive games

Engage in games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake to encourage social interaction and verbal responses.

3. Encourage imitation

Mimic your baby's sounds and encourage them to imitate your words, which will help develop their speech skills.

Expected milestones

- Understands "no."
 - Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamama" and "bababa."
 - Copies sounds and gestures of others.
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From 10 to 12 months

1. Encourage simple words

Prompt your baby to use simple words like "mama," "dada," "more," or "done." Celebrate any attempts they make to speak.

2. Ask questions

Ask simple questions and pause to give them a chance to respond, which helps them learn the structure of the conversation.

3. Introduce more complex songs and stories

To stimulate language comprehension, include songs with gestures, like "The Itsy Bitsy Spider," and read more complex stories.

Expected milestones

- Says simple words like "mama" and "dada."
 - Shakes head for "no."
 - Tries to imitate words.
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American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Activities to encourage speech and language development. <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/activities-to-encourage-speech-and-language-development/>

Raising Children Network (Australia). (2023, December 19). Language development: 3-12 months. <https://raisingchildren.net.au/babies/development/language-development/language-3-12-months>

United Nations Children's Fund. (n.d.). 21 learning activities for babies and toddlers. <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/21-learning-activities-babies-and-toddlers>