

Parenting Future Readers

No. 4 (Month 12)

Did you know?

Baby may be ready to say his first word! **Expressive language** refers to baby's use of real words to communicate. Which words will your baby say first? Baby's first words are often names for objects or people (mommy or daddy), simple action verbs (like go or drink), or social words like "bye-bye" or "hi". Early object words are often things that baby can handle like a ball or truck. Baby's first words will also have sounds that are easier to make. Sounds like *p*, *b*, *n*, and *w* are usually easier for babies than *g*, *s*, *ch*, *r* and *l* sounds.

Did you know?

Research shows that baby learns language more quickly if parents talk about whatever baby is interested in at the time. When you and baby are focused on the same object or activity this is called **joint attention**. Using joint attention helps provide visual cues for whatever you're talking about, as well as building on baby's interest, which makes it easier for baby to learn words.



Did you know?

Research shows that using **directives** that follow the child's focus of attention promotes vocabulary development. This means that if parents ask baby to do something with the toys she is already playing with this helps baby learn language. For instance, if baby is playing with a dump truck parents might ask her to put something in the dump truck.



Did you know?

When both mothers and fathers are involved with their one-year-olds, by preschool-age these children have better language skills.

Ways to Create Joint Attention

Watch for baby's signals

Babies use signals to let parents know what interests them.

- ❖ Young infants may stare at an object and parents can follow baby's gaze and talk about what baby sees.
- ❖ Baby may use "eye signals" where he looks back and forth between you and a toy to get you to notice and talk about the toy.
- ❖ When baby learns to gesture, she may point and make a noise to tell you where she wants you to focus your attention. Talk about what catches baby's interest.
- ❖ Baby may even bring you a toy to talk about.



Establish joint attention

Parents can also use signals to help develop joint attention with baby.

- ❖ Use eye signaling to get baby to pay attention to some person or object. Look at baby, and then look at an object while talking about it.
- ❖ Point to an object and encourage baby to look also by talking excitedly about the object. However, do this when baby isn't already engaged with something else.
- ❖ Read books with baby, pointing at and talking about the colorful pictures he sees.
- ❖ Give baby new objects to handle and talk about. You might say, "See the brown fur. It feels so soft, just like your blanket, but the sandpaper feels rough and scratchy."
- ❖ Take baby on outings and talk about the different things that baby sees. For example, you might take baby to the park or zoo and talk about the animals she sees.