



# TALK, READ AND SING TOGETHER EVERY DAY!

## TIPS FOR FAMILIES

When you talk, read and sing with your child – even before they can use words – you’re helping them learn. And making them happier too! Research shows that talking, reading and singing with your child every day from birth helps build their brains as well as important language, math, reading and social skills for use in school and beyond. Talk, read and sing with your child in the language you are most comfortable using.

You probably naturally talk to your baby about the events of the day. Keep doing it, and do it more! The more words and conversations you share together, the better prepared they will be to learn. You are your baby’s first teacher!

For children with disabilities or delays, communicate with your service providers and keep each other informed about the strategies you are using to enhance their language environment.

### TIPS FOR INFANTS

#### TALK

- Your touch and voice help your baby learn. Listen to the fun sounds your baby makes and repeat them. When they coo, coo back. Hold their hand gently and when they smile, smile back. Your loving touch combined with this back-and-forth “baby language” are the first steps in talking.
- Everywhere you go, talk about what you see and what your baby is looking at: “Wow, I see the four dogs, too!” “I love that red truck you’re playing with. It goes beep beep!”
- Play “Peek-a-boo” while getting your baby dressed. Ask, “Where’s (baby’s name)?” when you pull a shirt over your baby’s head. Then say, “There you are!”
- As you feed your baby, use words to describe what foods taste, feel, and look like. “This yogurt is smooth.” “That yellow banana is sweet!”
- Looking into your baby’s eyes, holding your baby’s hand, and talking to your baby in a high voice are all ways that you can help your child grow up to be a confident, loving adult.

#### READ

- Read a book or tell a story to your baby every day – in whatever language you feel most comfortable – beginning at birth.
- Cuddle with your baby as you share a book. It doesn’t matter how young your child is; even newborn babies are learning when their parents read with them.
- Point to the book’s pictures: “Look, the train goes choo-choo!” Using words to describe what you see builds language.

#### SING

- Hold your baby close during bedtime and sing a favorite song again and again. Singing the same song can help your baby feel calm and safe.
- Sing silly songs about your day to help get your baby’s attention during diaper changing.
- Your baby loves to hear your voice even if you think you can’t sing! The sound of your voice is comforting to your baby.

# TIPS FOR TODDLERS

## TALK

- Everywhere you go, talk about what you see. A stop sign, a traffic light, or a tree might seem boring to you, but it's a whole new world to your child, so teach them about it!
- Young children learn best during playful, everyday activities. Play "I-Spy" in the grocery store together. Choose a color and encourage your child to point out objects that match the color.
- Try some early math activities: point out shapes on your child's plate or around the kitchen. Ask your child, "How many sides does a square have?" "How about a triangle?"
- Play games during bath time to help your child learn new words. Take turns dropping toys in the water. Say, "Watch it sink!" or "It floats!"

## READ

- You can inspire a love of books and words in your young child by reading or telling a story together every day.
- Point to the pictures, letters, and numbers in books. Ask open-ended questions as you share the book together. "What do you see? How does he feel? What would you do if you were her? What's your favorite page?"
- Let your child turn the book's pages. It's OK if they skip pages, or like a few pages better than others. You just want your child to get used to touching books.

## SING

- Sing during everyday activities like driving in the car, or during bath time. It can be repetitive and simple, like "Wash your toes, wash your nose!"
- Singing songs that have basic counting or rhyming patterns also helps children learn basic math skills. "One, two, buckle my shoe. Three, four, open the door."
- Your toddler loves to get positive attention from you. Singing is a great way for you and your toddler to share an activity together.



You can find more tips like these—as well as videos, information, and more—on Too Small to Fail's website, [www.talkingisteaching.org](http://www.talkingisteaching.org).

Every child develops at his or her own pace, but if you are ever worried about your child's development, don't wait! Acting early can make a big difference. Remember, you know your child best. Talk with your child's doctor if you have concerns. Get tips to help you prepare at [cdc.gov/Concerned](http://cdc.gov/Concerned).

For more information on developmental and behavioral screening, visit [Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive!](#)

