

Hello everyone!

My name is Anne, I am an Early Years Practitioner and trained Henry Facilitator and I run the Little Explorers sessions. If you are feeling worried about yourself or your baby or struggling to cope with self-isolation do not hesitate to talk to your Midwife, Health Visitor, Doctor or phone NHS 111 for advice, information and reassurance. It might be just yourself and your baby and you may not have spoken to anyone for days or even maybe weeks. You might think that it does not matter to your baby if you do not talk to them but you may be surprised to learn how important it is to talk to your baby. Don't forget to let us know how you are getting on as we would love to hear from you, or you can complete our survey online.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GGJ9XP5>



I thought it would be a nice to keep in touch with you all by sharing some ways you can connect with your baby at home. We will be using the principles of **five to thrive**. Your baby's brain grows better when you do five simple things that feed it:

RESPOND. CUDDLE. RELAX. PLAY. TALK

Today let's look at **TALK**



My brain grows better when you talk to me

"I love the sound of your voice. I could hear well, even before I was born, and I love it when you talk, when you make nonsense noises, and when you sing. But I get frightened if there is too much shouting or arguing. When you talk to me, I copy you.

At first, I can make a few sounds, but the more you talk to me the more I can make sounds into words. I need you to tell me everything right from the start. I know nothing, so everything I learn in my life will be built on what you are teaching me now. I need you to listen to me as well.

Remember that my brain works more slowly than yours, so it will take me time to respond but it really helps when you speak to me. When I make sounds to you, it really helps the connections in my brain if you look straight at me and copy the sounds back to me, then I know you are listening to me, which makes me feel that I matter.

As I get older, take notice of what I am trying to say to you. Help me to tell you how I feel, so that I learn to manage my feelings by talking about them. Reading is a great way to talk to me.

Looking at a book together helps me to focus my eyes, to concentrate, and to think in a logical way. I can enjoy looking at a book with you right from the start for learning through all my life".

SEE OUR TALKING TIPS OVERLEAF

Where do I begin?

Did you know some of the easiest sounds for a child to produce are vowels? After vowels come the consonants p, m, h, n, w, b, d, and t! Combine these two early developing sounds and what do you get? Animal sounds! "Moo," "baa," and "neigh" just to name a few! While animal sounds are not words, they help children learn to associate a sound or word with an object - an animal in this case!

Start by copying your baby's sounds and generating new ones (from 'Ma ma ma' to 'Gag aga').

- Use as many rhymes, poems or songs to sing to your baby as you are the world's greatest singer.
- Read to your baby regularly, even when they are very young. Simple rhymes and rhythms will hold their attention.
- Talk to your baby about what they are experiencing. "Can you feel the soft toy?", "Did you see the cat?" or "You're enjoying your milk this morning."
- Provide a running commentary on your own life. Tell your baby about colours, count the steps you climb or the socks and towels as you do the washing.
- Keep your 'sharp' voice for when you are warning a baby about something.

REMEMBER

Any words will help to build your baby's brain. Pop songs, a shopping list or writing on the cereal packet are more meaningful than Shakespeare to babies and young children.



Families with more than one language

Speaking more than one language comes naturally to babies, whose brains are wired for all language. A child who develops good use of their home language (sometimes also called their mother tongue) is more likely to develop good English.

However, if parents use English instead, children can lose their mother tongue, neither language will progress, and the child may have problems in both languages.

At a very young age, a child learns to distinguish and develop the differences between languages used with them and around them. Families should continue to use their home language, talking to their child from the earliest age onwards.

This is central for the child's communication, social, and emotional development. Language feeds the brain and links us to our family, our community and our friends.

This is vital for a young child's sense of self.

Play ideas

Babies and young children love to play with their parents and other adults. Young children particularly learn from repetition as part of play, using physical or verbal prompts. The following ideas are particularly helpful at different stages of language development but can take many other forms too. The important thing is that both parent and child enjoy it and have fun together, rather than seeing play as an opportunity to 'teach' them.

Age	Play Ideas
0-6months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to Face reading and singing, • Sharing books, • Action rhymes, • People games such as peek-a-boo or gentle tickling
6 months - 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music, instruments, containers with different sounds, • Tummy time, • Reaching and rolling, • Objects and sounds, • Naming body parts, • Singing repetitive songs, • Sharing books, • Action rhymes, • People games, such as peek-a-boo or gentle tickling
1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a house out of a box, • Making noises with saucepans, pots and pans, • Pretend games e.g. putting teddy to bed, having a cup of tea, • Going for a walk and chatting about the world around, • Painting and drawing, • Playing with bubbles, • Visiting the library to borrow books and hear stories (When it is safe to do so)
2-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the child's lead-joining in their play, • Obstacle course, • Dressing up, • Role play games, such as shopping or playing with dolls, • Actively playing and interacting with other children, • Puzzles and simple games

Further Useful Information

The Communication Trust www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources
 Talking point www.talkingpoint.org.uk
 Words of life www.wordsforlife.org.uk
 Ican www.Ican.org.uk
 Small Talk www.hello.org.uk
 Talk to your baby www.literacytrust.org.uk