

How Can I Help My Baby to Listen and Talk?

Listening skills grow and change along with your baby's other behaviors. The chart below tells how babies use their hearing as they grow.

1-3 months

- jumps or startles when there is a sudden loud sound
- seems aware of sounds (telephone ringing, music)
- voice is soothing and comforting your baby

3-6 months

- turns eyes and head to look for sounds or baby's name
- enjoys music and noise-making toys
- begins to coo and gurgle (e.g., ooh, ba-ba)

6-10 months

- responds to familiar voices and sounds
- makes many different babbling sounds
- understands common words such as "no" and "more"

10-15 months

- understands when you say simple things
- uses many sounds and imitates simple words
- may use a few single words meaningfully

15-18 months

- can tell where sounds are coming from
- points to body parts
- uses 3 or 4 words in addition to ma-ma and da-da

24 months

- uses 20 - 50 words
- may combine 2 words such as "mommy go" or "want juice"
- follows simple directions such as "put the cup on the table"

Getting Help

If you suspect a problem, consult a Registered Audiologist (R.Aud). No referral is necessary. To find a practitioner:

- Contact HEALTHLink Alberta - Health Advice 24/7 at 8-1-1 or visit: www.MyHealth.Alberta.ca
- Inquire at a Public Health Centre
- Look for a registered audiologist. Check the Yellow Pages or Canpages for listings under 'Audiologist'.



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What Can I Do?

- Talk to your baby in a pleasant and natural voice.
- Hold your young baby close to you and talk or sing quietly.
- Try to imitate the sounds your baby makes.
- Provide toys like rattles, squeakers, and bells.
- Play games with your baby like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake.
- Read books and talk about objects and toys. Ask your baby to point to the pictures.
- Call attention to sounds around your baby.
- Make simple speech sounds (e.g., dada, bye-bye) and animal sounds, and encourage your baby to copy you.
- Name objects such as toys, food and body parts, and encourage your baby to copy you.
- Sing simple songs, say short rhymes, and play musical games with your baby.

When Should I Have My Baby's Hearing Tested?

Hearing, talking and understanding speech are closely related. If you think your baby has a hearing problem, talk to your doctor and have your baby's hearing tested by an audiologist as soon as possible. A baby is never too young to have a hearing test. Your child will experience greater success, if an existing hearing loss is found early.

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