

Communicative Temptations

from Wetherby &
Prizant (1989)

When trying to help your child to actively participate in communication, there has to be a need, an opportunity, and a reward for his or her efforts. Communicative Temptations are a way to make sure that these three things happen.

One of the most important things that we can do to assist in a child's development of communication, is to not anticipate his or her needs/wants. By not anticipating, you give your child an opportunity to show what s/he needs/wants. If the need is then fulfilled, there is a great chance that your child's efforts will be rewarded, and that s/he will try the communication method again. Your child can learn to be an active communicator, not a passive communicator.

1. Eat a desired food item in front of your child without offering any to him or her.
2. Activate a wind up toy, let it deactivate and hand it to your child.
3. Give your child four blocks to drop in a box one at a time (or use some other action that your child will repeat, such a stacking the blocks or dropping the blocks on the floor), then immediately give your child a small animal figure to drop in the box.
4. Look through a few books with your child.
5. Initiate a familiar and an unfamiliar social game with your child until s/he expresses pleasure, then stop the game and wait.
6. Open a jar of bubbles, blow bubbles, then close the jar tightly. Hand the closed jar to your child.
7. Blow up a balloon and slowly deflate it. Hand the deflated balloon to your child or hold the deflated balloon to your mouth and wait.
8. Hold a food item or toy that your child dislikes out near your child to offer it.
9. Place a desired food item or toy in a clear container that your child cannot open while your child is watching. Put the container in front of your child and wait.
10. Place your child's hands in a cold; wet or sticky substance, such as jello, pudding or paste.

11. Roll a ball to your child. After your child returns the ball three times, immediately roll a rattle or a toy on wheels to him or her.
12. Engage your child in putting together a puzzle. After your child has put in 3 pieces, offer your child a piece that does not fit.
13. Engage your child in an activity with a something that can be easily spilled (or dropped, broken, torn, etc.). Suddenly spill some of the substance on the table or floor in front of your child and wait.
14. Wave and say "bye bye" to a toy upon removing it from the play area. Repeat this for a second and third toy, and do nothing when removing a fourth toy. These four trials should be interspersed throughout the other temptations, rather than be presented in a series.
15. Hide a stuffed animal under the table. Knock, then bring out the animal. Have the animal greet your child the first time. Repeat this for a second and third time, and do nothing when bringing out the animal for the fourth time. These four trials should also be interspersed when presented.
16. Put an object that makes noise in an opaque bag and shake the bag. Hold up the bag and wait.
17. Give your child the materials for an activity of interest that needs an instrument for completion (e.g., piece of paper to draw on or cut; bowl of pudding or soup). Hold the instrument out of your child's reach and wait.
18. Engage your child in an activity of interest that needs an instrument for completion (e.g., crayon for drawing, spoon for eating, or wand for blowing bubbles). Have a third person come over and take the instrument, go sit on the distant side of the room, while holding the instrument within your child's sight and wait.

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S

INTRODUCTION TO PARENTS

As a speech-language pathologist, I have successfully used these pictures with hundreds of children over the past 25 years to stimulate single words. These children typically are from 12 to 30 months of age, who are not talking or sometimes saying only a few words.

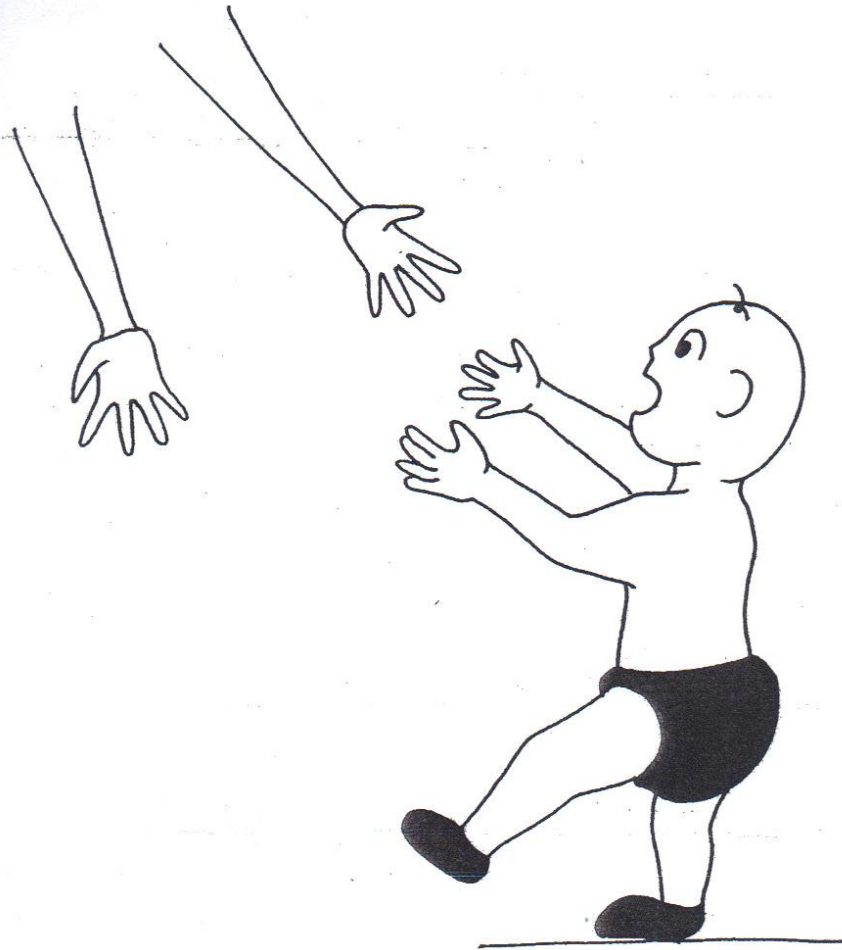
This picture book contains 27 pictures for single words and two-word phrases using 11 common nouns, 9 common action words, 5 exclamations, 3 sound-words, and 6 other early words. Try to use a lively voice when reading the words to your child. *You may also easily model these words and phrases to your child in real life and in play situations.*

It's important to remember that understanding comes before production (talking). You may go through the picture book several times (as children often love to do) before your child begins to say any of the words or phrases that you may have been reading to him/her.

When your child does begin to talk about the pictures, either imitatively or spontaneously, you should follow the principles of "praise" and "echo-expansion modeling" (see the booklet *Help Me Talk* for stimulation techniques #7 and #8).

Remember most young children at one or two years have relatively short attention spans. They often like to go from page to page rather quickly.

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S

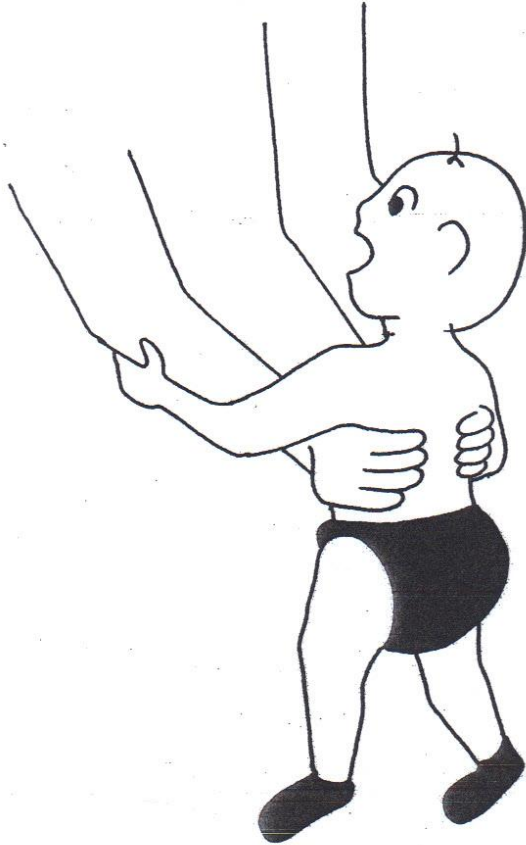


Baby walk

www.pearson.com.au

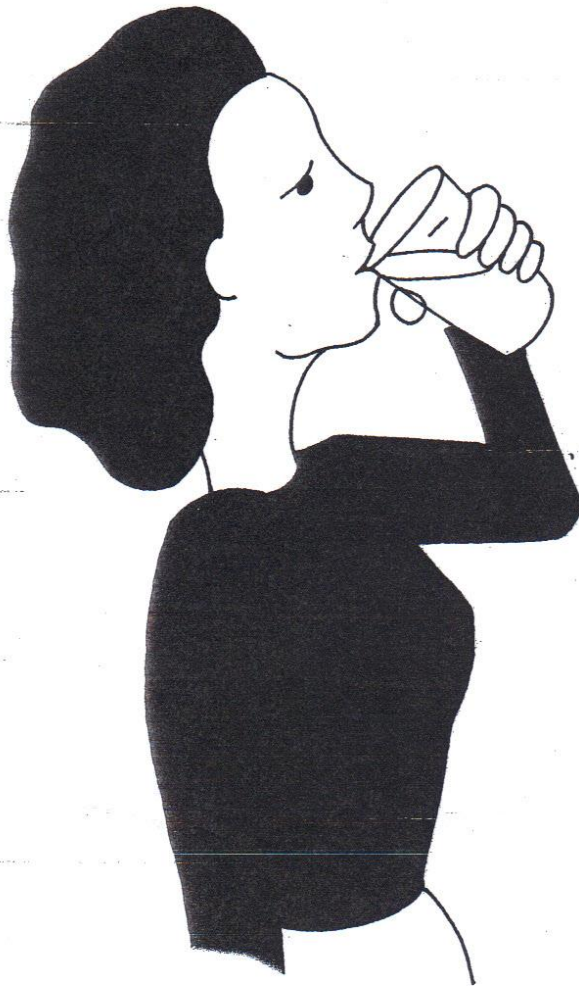


B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



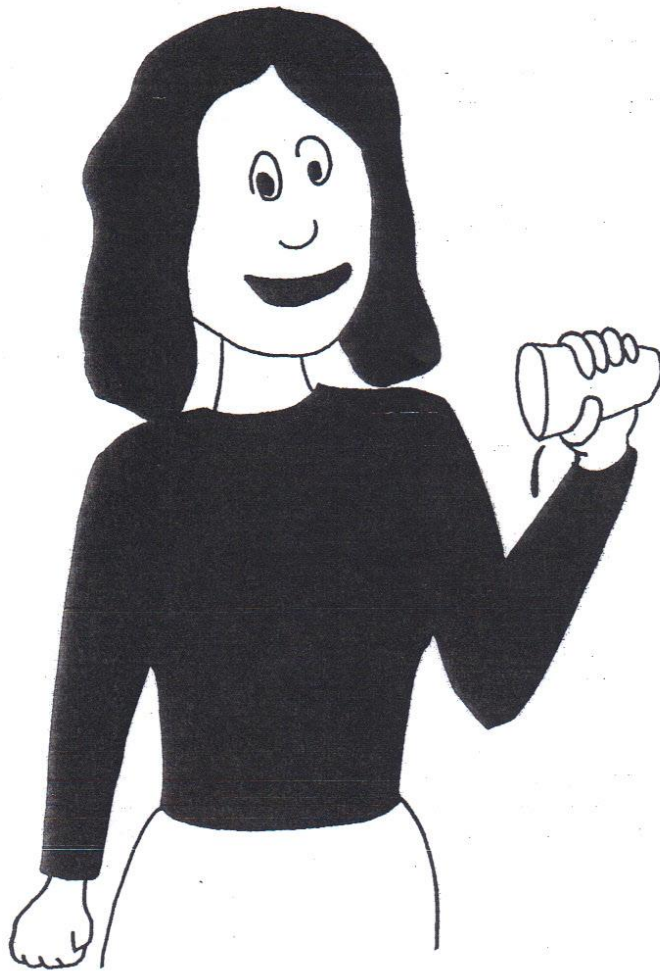
Up! Baby up!

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



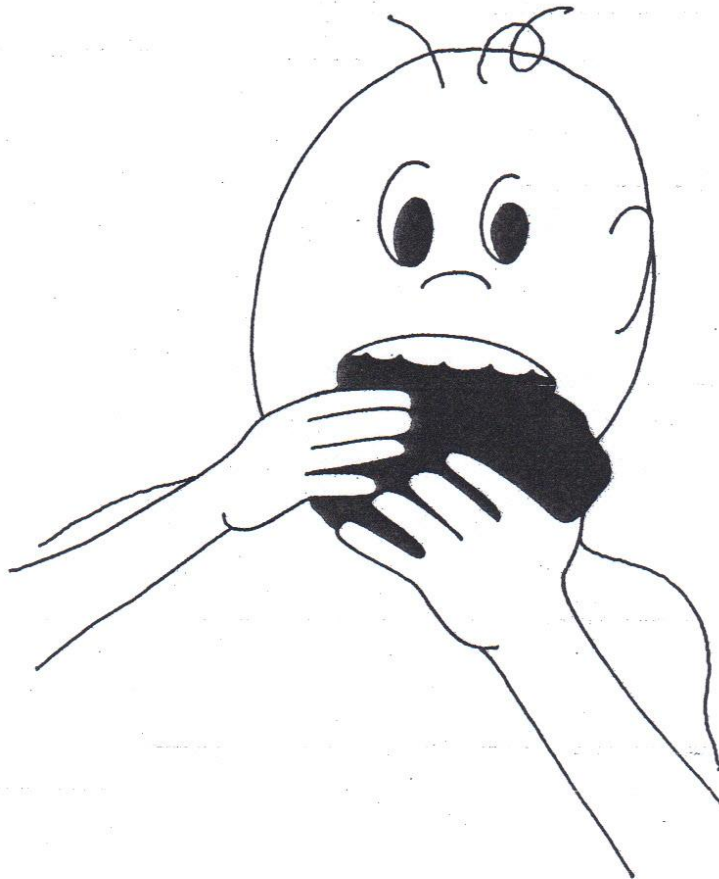
Mama drink

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



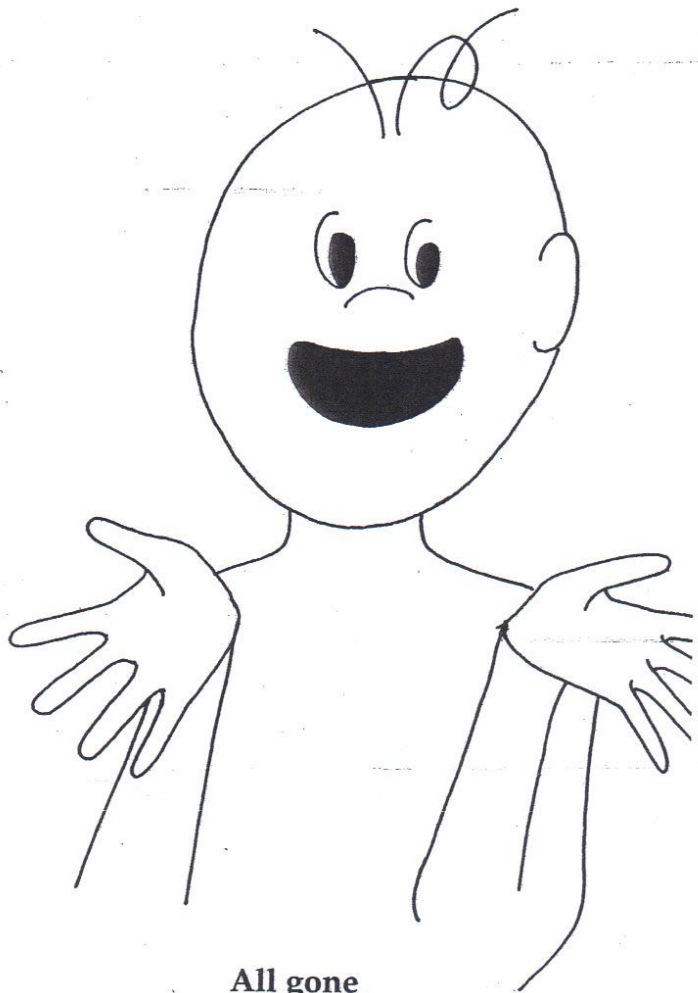
Ahhh!

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



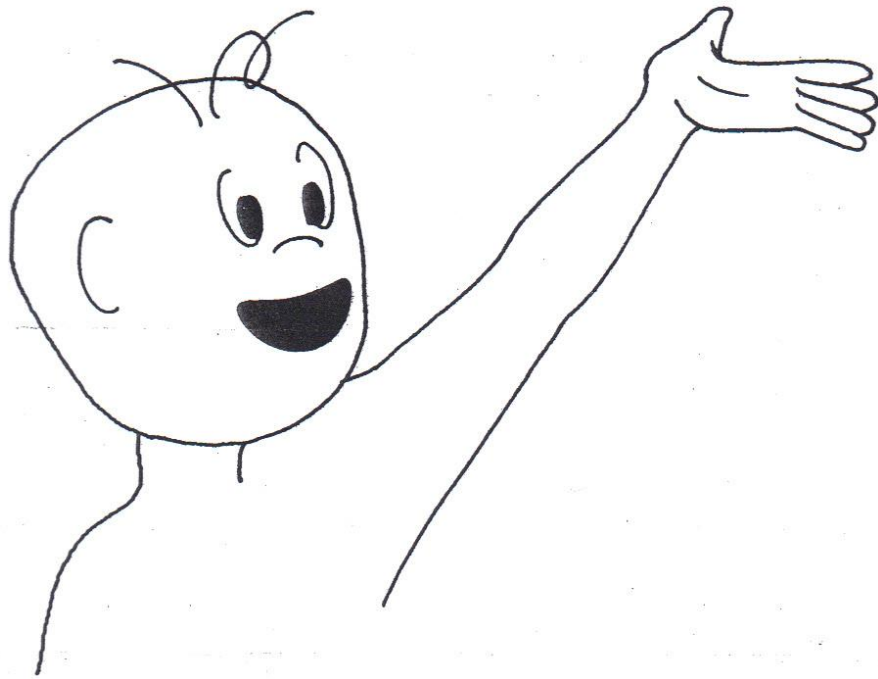
Eat cookie

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



All gone

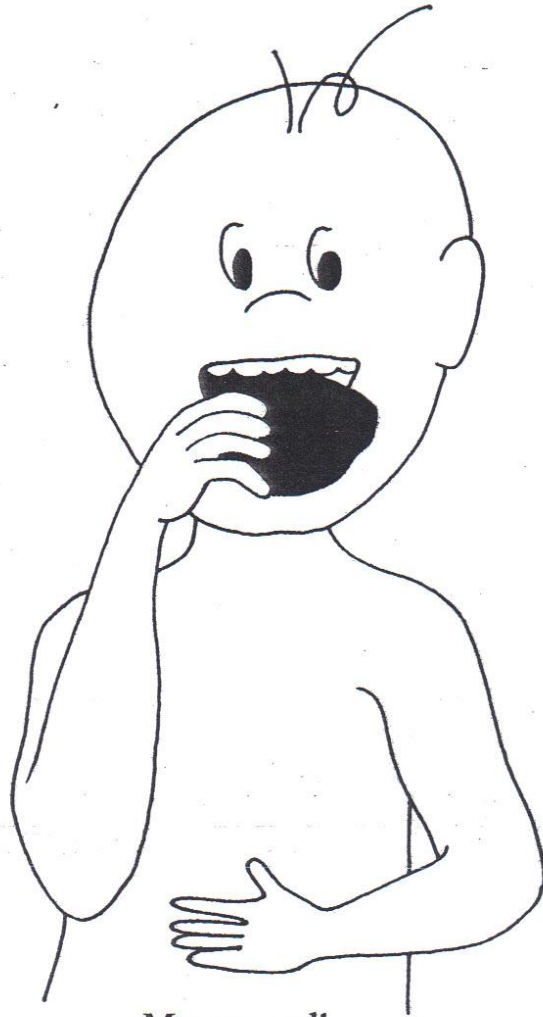
B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



More!

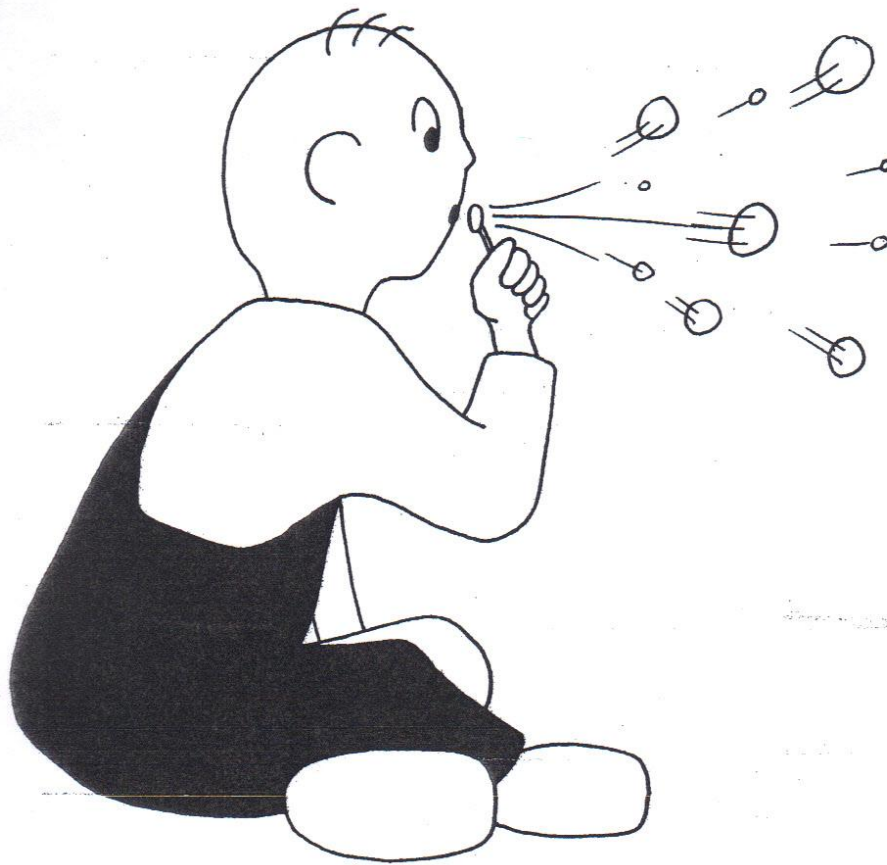


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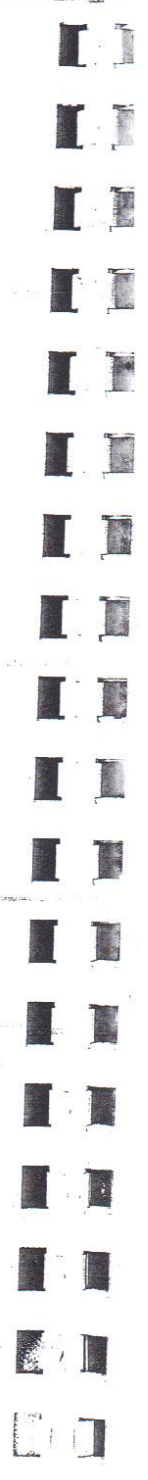


Mmm-good!

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Blow bubbles



B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Pop! Pop!

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



All gone!



B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S

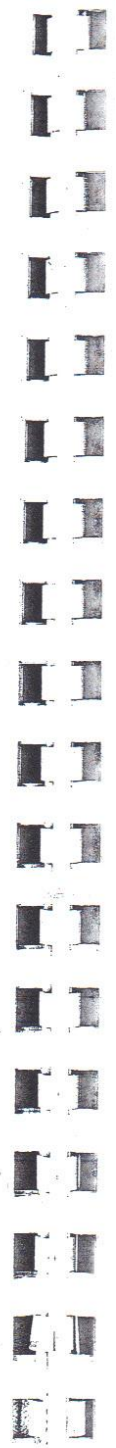


More bubbles

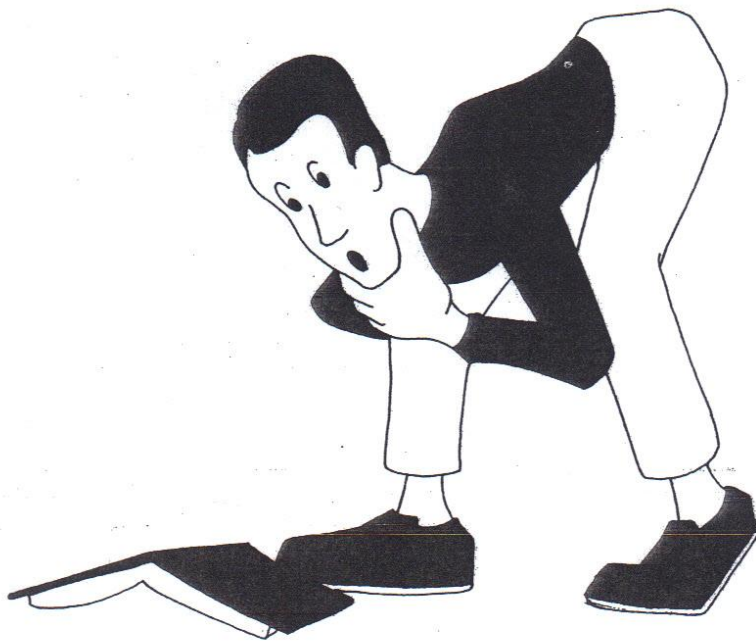
B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Uh-oh!



B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S

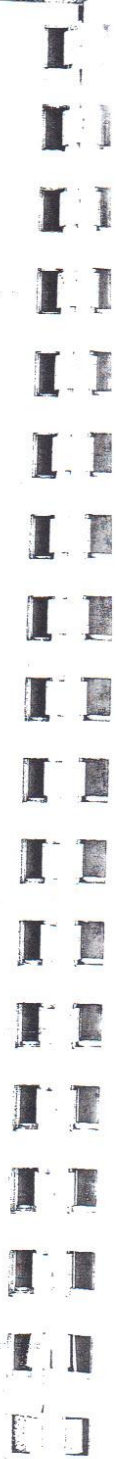


Book fall

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Cook food

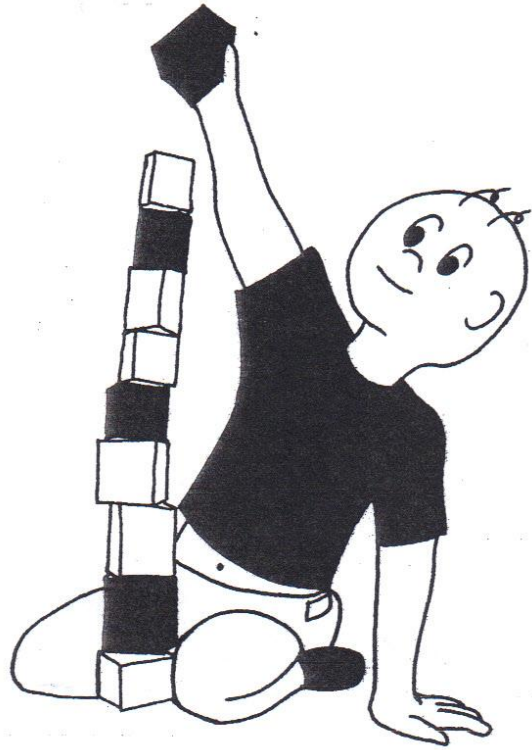


B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Hot! Pan hot!

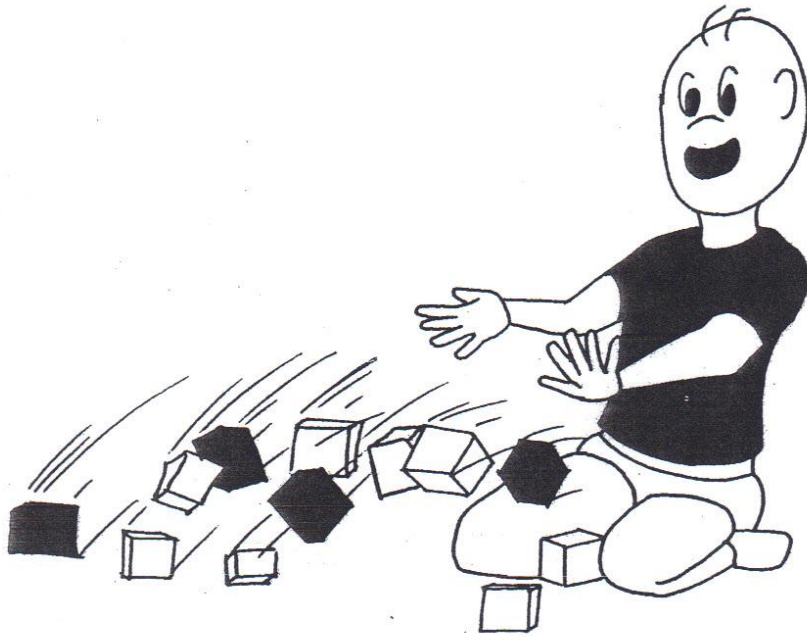
B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Blocks "so high!"

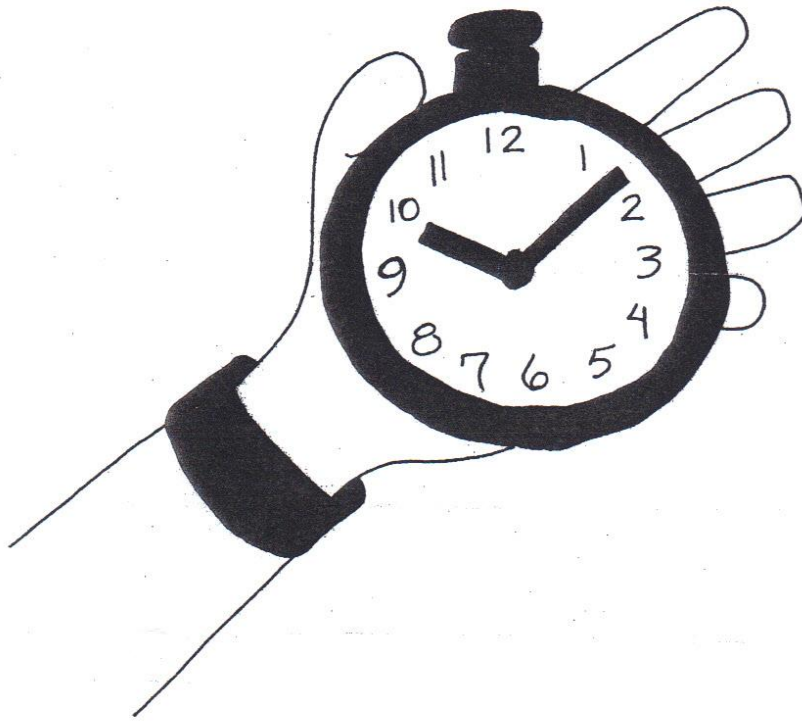


B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



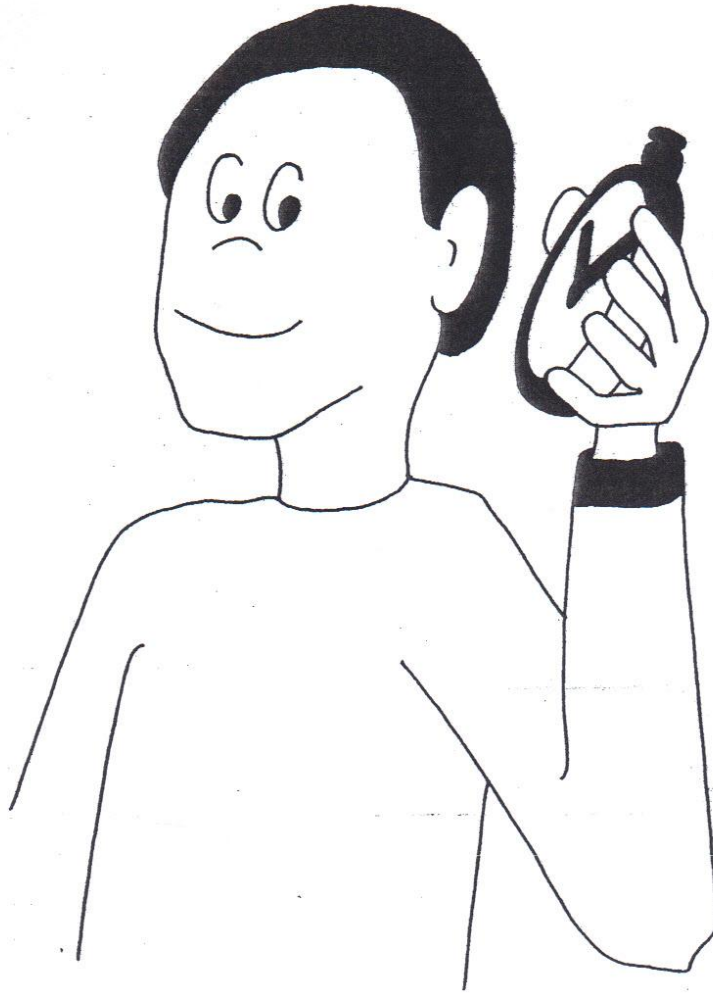
Boom!

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



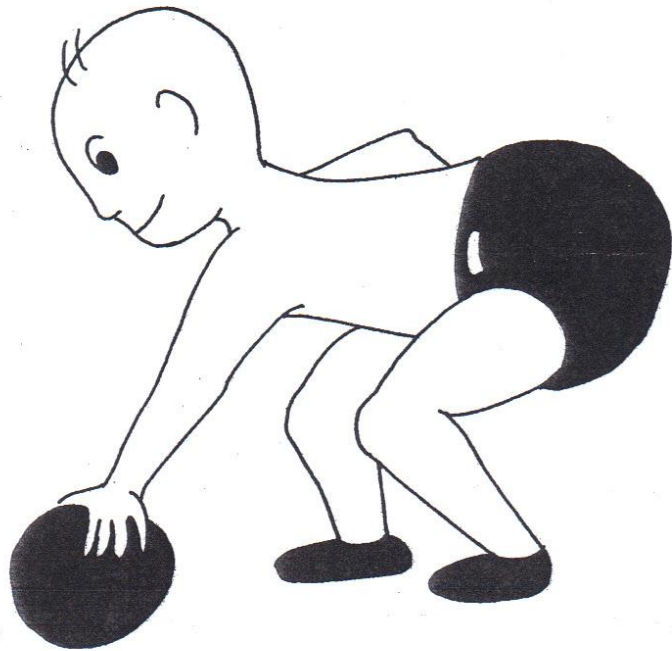
Watch

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



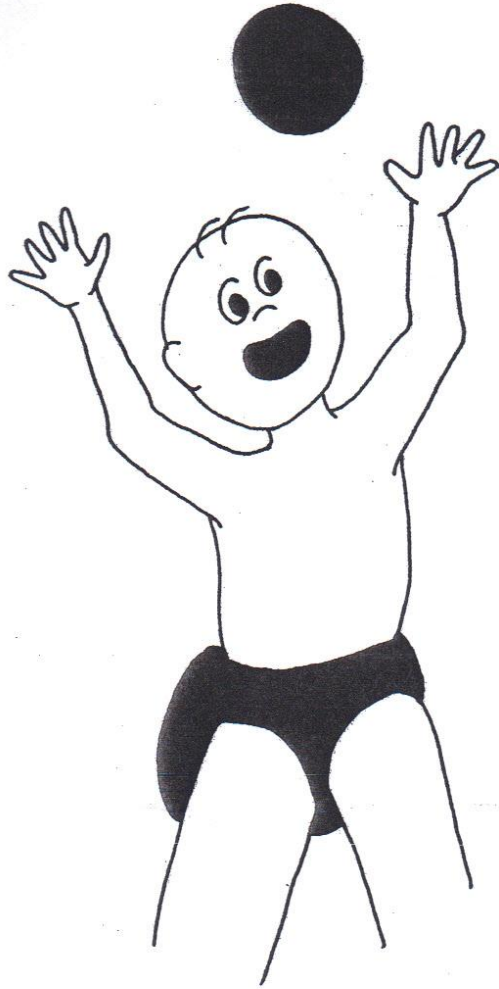
Tick-tock tick-tock!

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Get ball

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Up! Ball up!

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Daddy fall

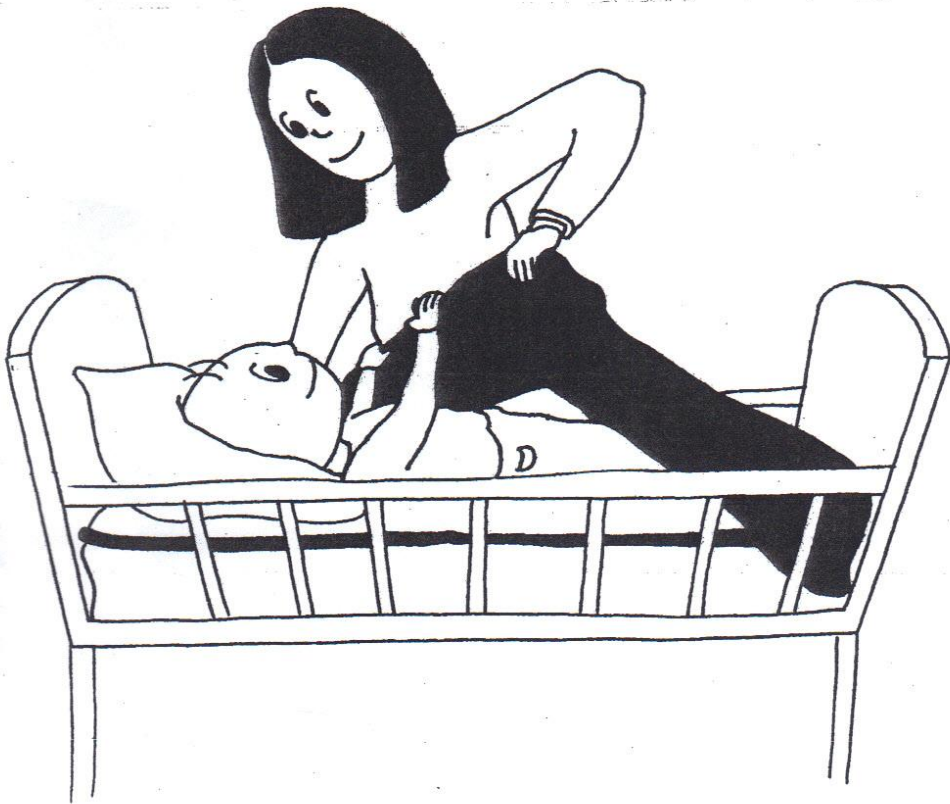


B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



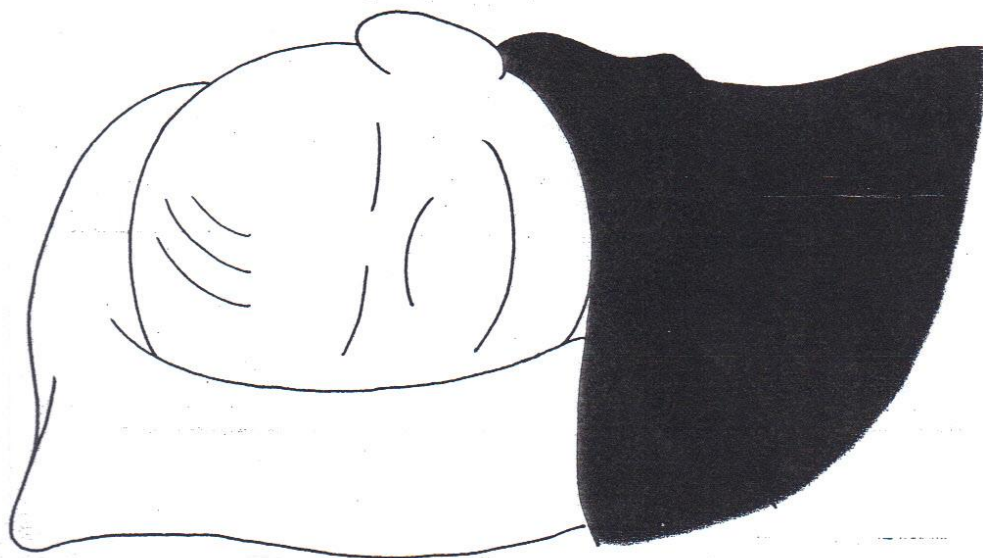
Ouch!

B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Nite-nite!

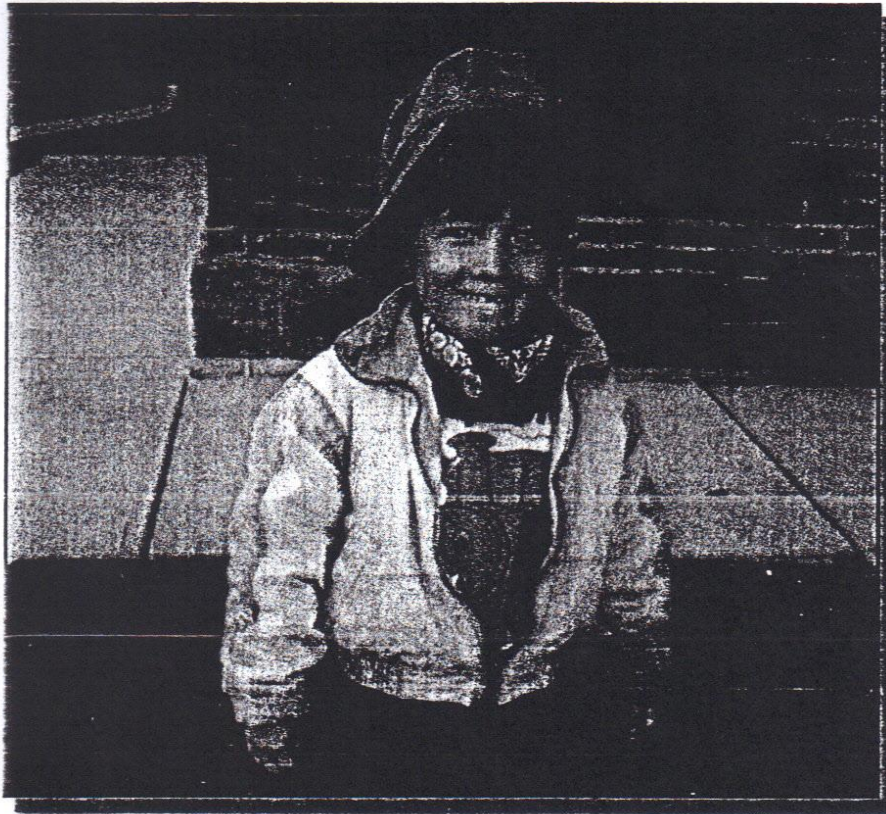
B A B Y ' S E A R L Y W O R D S



Baby sleep

HELP ME TALK

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE STIMULATION TECHNIQUES
FOR CHILDREN 1 TO 3 YEARS



Pi Communication Materials

H E L P M E T A L K

INTRODUCTION TO PARENTS

On many occasions over the past several years, parents have contacted me to arrange for an evaluation of their young child who "is not talking" or saying only a few words. During the evaluation process, it indeed becomes apparent that the child is not talking at a level appropriate for his age; and may be delayed in his talking abilities up to six months, one year, or even longer. However, for many of these children, their level of listening abilities (understanding) is at or close to normal for their age.

For these children their innate (built-in) drive to master language has not begun on its own. Because of various factors involving environment, behavior, and/or individual differences, these children need some special help to overcome their talking delay. With instruction and guidance by a speech-language pathologist, average parents are more than capable of giving this special help to their child and helping him catch up to his age level in a matter of months - not years.

It is with this group of "expressively delayed children" that this booklet concerns itself.

It is also important to realize that you as a parent are not to blame for your child's delay in talking. It's not that you have been raising your child wrong. Rather, your child is in need of that special help partly because of his own individual differences in the way he perceives and reacts to his environment.

H E L P M E T A L K

1

NOT ANTICIPATING NEEDS OR DESIRES

Do not anticipate your child's every need or desire before he has a chance to make them known to you. If your child gets what he wants without communicating for it, he will not even bother to point, gesture, or possibly ask.

This also includes getting the cooperation of any older brother or sister to not talk for your child. An older brother or sister can often greatly help or hurt your speech and language stimulation efforts in many areas.

EXAMPLE: When your child is not with you, place one of his favorite toys or dolls up high where he can't reach it but where he can plainly see it. Later when he sees it, he will have to communicate by pointing or otherwise that he wants the toy or doll.

EXAMPLE: When the family sits down to eat breakfast, and everyone has a spoon except your child, he will have to communicate by pointing or otherwise that he wants a spoon, too.

EXAMPLE: If you put on only one of your child's shoes and then begin to act as if you're finished, he will again likely have to communicate by pointing or otherwise that you forgot to put on the other shoe.

EXAMPLE: If your child is used to watching some T.V. at a particular time, don't automatically turn it on for him. Wait for him to communicate by pointing or otherwise that he wants to watch T.V. Also, when you do turn it on for him to watch, occasionally leave off the sound. Again, he will have to communicate by pointing or otherwise that he needs the sound to the T.V.

DELAYING RESPONSES TO GESTURES

Delay your responses to your child's pointing, gestures, or babbling when he wants things. When your child points or gestures without attempting to talk, he is still trying to communicate, and you eventually do have to respond to his non-verbal communication. However, just pretend you don't understand what he wants for 15-20 seconds and then respond appropriately.

Whereas, if he attempts to say any meaningful word(s), you would respond appropriately to him right away. Show your child that the payoff for attempting to use words is much greater - things happen faster.

EXAMPLE: When your child points to a bottle of juice on the kitchen counter, you might say, "I'm not sure. Do you want a spoon? (pause); the ketchup? (pause); my pencil? (pause); your teddy? (pause)." Finally, you might say, "some juice? (pause) Oh, you want juice." Then as you hand him his cup of juice, you might add, "juice." But don't ask him or expect him to say the word juice right then.

EXAMPLE: When your child takes your hand and leads you to the front door because he wants to go outside, you might say, "What do you want? (pause); go nite-nite? (pause); watch some T.V.? (pause); get your dolly? (pause); I don't know — sit on the floor? (pause)." Finally, you might say, "go outside? (pause) That's what you want — to go outside! Next time tell me. Let's go outside." But again don't ask him or expect him to say the word(s) outside or go outside right then.

H E L P M E T A L K

3

PARENT'S SPEECH

a) Labelling: Name nouns (objects) and verbs (actions) in real life and in pictures. Give your child a chance to respond; wait for a second or two after saying a word; but don't ask or expect him to do so right away.

b) Use slow, clear, simple speech when talking to your child. By the age of one, never talk baby-talk to your child. Even when he mispronounces a word in a "cute" way, rather than say it back to him exactly as he said it, pronounce the word back to him correctly and then maybe use it in a phrase or short sentence.

EXAMPLE: If your child says "wa-wa" for water, don't tell him, "wa-wa — yes — drink wa-wa." Instead, you might say, "water — yes — drink water."

c) Always try to make your child feel good about making the effort to speak. However, if he uses unintelligible jabber (jargon), never pretend to understand what he says and never talk for him by guessing at or interpreting what he says. You need to be honest and let him know you didn't understand what he just said.

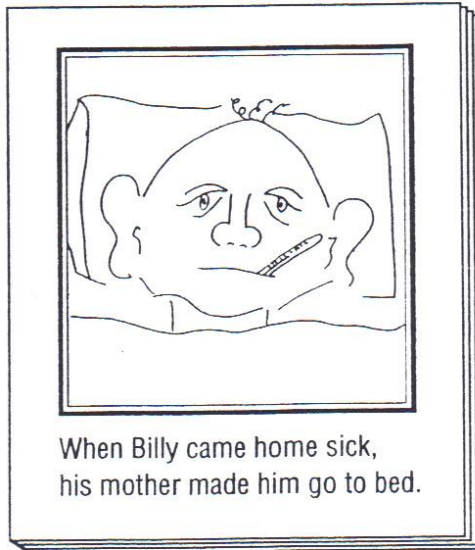
EXAMPLE: After your child finishes telling you a completely unintelligible, sentence-like utterance, you might say, "You talked. I like that. But I don't know what you said," and possibly shrug your shoulders with a blank look.

READING BOOKS

Choose colorful books with large, simple pictures. How you read to a one or two year old is different than how you read to a three or four year old. Make up your own simple version using a phrase or short sentence (depending on the talking level of your child) for each picture - rather than actually reading what is written on the page. Point out the action in the picture and the things you talk about.

Also, remember that a young child's attention span is much shorter than that of an older child's. So you have to keep turning the pages at a faster rate when "reading" to a very young child if you want to hold his attention to the book.

EXAMPLE: Rather than read the words printed below the picture to your child, you might say, "boy sick" or "Billy sick" or "feels bad" or "boy in bed." You would say only one of these possible phrases and then continue on to the next page of the book.



SELF-TALK

Talk out-loud about what you are seeing, hearing, doing, or feeling when your child is nearby or within hearing range. He does not have to be close to you or pay attention to you when you talk out-loud; he only has to be within hearing range. Be sure to use slow, clear, simple words and short phrases.

EXAMPLE: When you're washing the dishes, and your child is playing with toys or objects on the kitchen floor, you might say, "hot water — pick up cup — dirty cup — wash — wash — wash the cup — the cup is clean — pick up ..., etc."

EXAMPLE: When you're putting up a picture on the wall, and your child is playing in the corner of the room, you might say, "hammer — hammer pounds — pound nail — pound — pound the nail — put hammer down — pick up picture — picture on wall."

EXAMPLE: When you're outside pulling up weeds in the yard, and your child is nearby playing in the grass, you might say, "looking — looking for weeds — see a weed — bend down — grab the weed — pull weed — in the bag — looking — looking for ..., etc."

EXAMPLE: When you're sitting down to read the newspaper in the morning or evening, and your child is playing in the same room, you might say, "sit down — pick up paper — read — read — read the paper — turn page — look at picture — read paper — turn page, etc."

PARALLEL TALK

Talk out-loud about what is happening to your child. Use words that describe what he is doing, seeing, hearing, or feeling when your child is nearby or within hearing range. Again, he does not have to be close to you or pay attention to you when you talk out-loud; he only has to be within hearing range. Be sure to use slow, clear, simple words and short phrases.

EXAMPLE: When you and your child are outside and he falls down in the dirt while running around, you might say, "fall down — Billy gets up — dirty hands — run in house."

EXAMPLE: When your child is playing with a ball and then daddy comes home, you might say, "roll ball — get ball — pick up ball — daddy home — run to daddy — Billy wants up."

EXAMPLE: When your child is playing with a toy truck on the floor, you might say, "Billy gets truck — big truck — push the truck — truck goes — truck stops — pick up truck — drop the truck — boom!"

EXAMPLE: When your child is playing with the family dog, you might say, "Billy sees dog — walk to dog — get down — pet — pet — pet the dog — nice dog — pull the tail — lay on dog — dog gets up — bye-bye dog."

H E L P M E T A L K

7

REINFORCEMENT (PRAISE)

Respond quickly to your child's speech attempts and verbal requests by your actions and/or verbal responses.

Your non-verbal praise (actions) can include a smile, a hug, a pat on the back, eye contact, clapping your hands, etc.

Your verbal praise can include modeling back to your child what he said or just letting him know you like what he said.

EXAMPLE: When you are playing with your child and he says "ba" for ball the first time, you might open your eyes wide, smile, and then say, "ball — ball rolls — I like your talking."

EXAMPLE: When your child says "car" and points to his toy car on the table because he wants to play with it, you might clap your hands and say, "car — you want car." Then as you hand him his toy car, you might add, "take car."

EXAMPLE: When you're cooking soup at the stove and your child comes up behind you and says "hot", you might turn and make eye contact and pat him on the back while you say, "hot pan! — you talked — mama's happy."

EXAMPLE: When you're preparing dinner and your child comes up to you and says "me _andy," but you don't want to give him any candy before dinner, you might give him a hug and say, "you want candy — good talking — but no candy — eat dinner first — then have candy."

ECHO-EXPANSION MODELING

As a general rule, add one or two words to what your child says when you respond back to him. A child loves to hear his own words repeated back to him! Also, your child's word order may be different than yours. Let him hear the right word order; and correct the basic grammar if necessary. Don't worry about using perfect grammar yourself or being a perfect model. Just follow the general rules above.

- EXAMPLES:
- Change "up" to "come up"
 - Change "daddy" to "daddy home"
 - Change "baby" to "baby cry"
 - Change "allgone" to "cake allgone"
 - Change "mine" to "this is mine"
 - Change "shoe" to "take off shoe"

 - Change "car go" to "car goes fast"
 - Change "kitty jump" to "kitty jumps fence"
 - Change "milk more" to "want more milk"
 - Change "me sock" to "put on socks"
 - Change "him go" to "he is going"
 - Change "man fall" to "the man fell down"
 - Change "open door" to "open up the door"
 - Change "boy eat" to "the boy is eating"
 - Change "no want" to "I don't want it"
 - Change "me go" to "I want to go"

 - Change "daddy go bye-bye" to "daddy's going to work"
 - Change "look man walk" to "look at the man walking"
 - Change "doggie run allgone" to "the doggie ran away"
 - Change "no eat pie" to "I didn't eat the pie"
 - Change "we play car" to "let's play with the car"

EXPECTATIONS

Your expectations, according to the level your child is at, are very important. You must always let your child know your expectations concerning his speech. If he has said a word or phrase on his own (spontaneously) a few times already, and then doesn't use it again in the same or similar situation, make your child aware that he's not saying something which you know he can say and that you're not happy about it. Let him know you expect him to keep using that word or phrase.

EXAMPLE: If you've heard your child say "coo-ee" for cookie on his own a couple of times last week, but today he's just pointing to the cookie jar and saying "uh," you might say, "You can say cookie. Mama's not happy. You didn't talk. No cookie — not now." You should sound and act unhappy.

However, if you've never heard your child say "coo-ee" for cookie before on his own, it would not be fair to expect him to try to say cookie before you gave him one.

EXAMPLE: Once you've heard your child say "more juice" on his own a few times when he holds out his cup at the table, but one day he just holds out his cup and looks at you, you might say, "You can talk. You know 'more juice'. I don't like that. You didn't tell me." Again, you should sound and act unhappy as you let him know, "No more juice right now."

However, again, if you've never heard your child say "more juice" before on his own, it would not be fair to expect him to try to say those words before you gave him any more juice.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

a) Ask Questions: Ask your child "What's that?" or "What am I doing?" - with objects, actions, or pictures.

EXAMPLE: Play the "What's that?" game. Point to an object in the room and then ask your child "What's that?" Wait for a second or two and then answer your own question with one word; possibly using a different voice - as your child may find that quite funny and entertaining. Repeat the above with several common objects in the room. After some time, your child will likely begin to answer the question on an inconsistent basis.

EXAMPLE: Play the "What am I doing?" game, which is similar to the "What's that?" game. Start doing some common action, such as jumping, and then ask your child, "What am I doing?" Wait for a second or two and then answer your own question with one word; again possibly using a different voice. Repeat the above with several common actions. Again, after some time, your child will likely begin to answer the question on an inconsistent basis.

b) If your child is not at the imitative level, take the pressure off him for speech. Just model the words and phrases to him. Give him time to respond - wait a few seconds for him to talk - but don't pressure him to do so.

c) Encourage independence and separation from you if your child is overly shy or attached to you.

H E L P M E T A L K

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE TERMS

*ARTICULATION:

- Refers to the clearness of speech; the production of individual consonant and vowel sounds.
- Correct and consistent production of all vowel sounds occurs by 24-30 months.
- There is a developmental sequence to the learning of consonant sounds. A child doesn't learn to master all consonants sounds at the same time. Ninety percent of children are expected to have mastered some consonants by age 3 and other ones not until age 7.
- At age 3 a child is expected to be 75% intelligible to adults (non-parents) in spontaneous speech.
- Standardized articulation testing typically isn't done until a child turns 3 years old.

*RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE:

- Is the processing of language information being received by a child; his ability to understand what is said to him.
- This includes: the size of his receptive vocabulary (his understanding of single words); the following of commands or directions; the understanding of questions; the understanding of prepositions (on vs. under); the comprehension of basic concepts (the number one); etc.
- Standardized testing of the receptive language abilities of a child can be done at any age.

H E L P M E T A L K

*EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE:

- Is the processing of language information being spoken by a child; his ability to state his needs, ideas, and feelings.
- This includes: the size of his expressive vocabulary (his naming of single words); the putting together of words to form phrases and sentences; the asking of questions; the use of pronouns, negatives, and prepositions; the use of verb tense; etc.
- A child says his first word at 10-15 months.
- A child begins to put two words together at 18-24 months.
- Standardized testing of the expressive language abilities of a child can be done at any age.

*JARGON:

- Many children by 1^{1/2} years of age will try to talk as fast as their parents. This often results in unintelligible jabber that is called jargon. Jargon is full of many different sounds and is very expressive.
- Some children will not use any jargon as they learn to talk.
- It begins at 12-15 months.
- It reaches a peak at about 18 months.
- Jargon is often not being used in favor of meaningful phrases by 24 months.
- It disappears by 30 months.

*ECHOLALIA:

- Echolalia is the repeating of part or all of what another person says.
- It begins noticeably at about 18 months.
- It's not observed all the time in a child's language.
- It disappears by 30 months.

LANGUAGE AND PLAY DEVELOPMENTAL CHART

| Age | Play and Language Behaviors |
|--------------|--|
| 12-18 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Says first words. Follows simple directions. Discovers how to operate simple toys. Begins to stack, knock down, fill and dump toys. Shows affection to caretakers. |
| 2 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses two-word combinations. Has about 300 words. Asks simple questions. Attends to an interesting activity for six to seven minutes. Engages in pretend activities with another person or with a doll. Builds a six- to eight-block tower. Stacks, knocks down, fills and dumps toys. Shows interest in other children. |
| 3 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses three- to four-word combinations. Has about 900 words. Tells very simple stories. Begins to talk about the past and the future. Attends to an interesting activity for eight to nine minutes. Uses props during pretend-play sequences. Uses blocks imaginatively. Plays associatively with other children. |
| 4 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses four- to five-word combinations. Has about 1,500 words. Asks many questions. Begins to answer why questions. Understands simple time concepts. Has intelligible speech. Attends to an interesting activity for 11 to 12 minutes. Plans and problem-solves during play. Builds familiar structures with blocks. Begins to play cooperatively with other children. |
| 5 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has five- to six-word sentences. Uses complex sentences. Understands about 4,000 words. Tells stories with plots. Likes to pretend and to enact stories. Attends to an interesting activity for 12 to 13 minutes. Plays cooperatively with other children. |

Symbolic Play Checklist

| Age | Symbolic Play |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 9–12 Months | <p>Is aware that objects exist when not seen. Finds hidden toys.</p> <p>Obtains a desired object by crawling, walking or pulling.</p> <p>Uses some toys appropriately without mouthing or banging.</p> |
| 13–17 Months | <p>Explores toys. Discovers how to operate a toy by trial and error.</p> <p>Obtains adult help if unable to operate. Hands object to adult.</p> |
| 18–19 Months | <p>Pretends to sleep, drink or groom.</p> <p>Uses many objects and toys appropriately.</p> <p>Uses an object such as a stick or blanket to reach a toy.</p> |
| 19–22 Months | <p>Pretends with a doll. Cares for a doll.</p> <p>Performs pretend acts on two or more objects or persons. Feeds mommy and a doll.</p> <p>Needs realistic props when pretending.</p> <p>Uses two toys when pretending: stirs pot with spoon, pours from bottle into a cup.</p> |
| 24 Months | <p>Begins to represent daily routines: cooking, cleaning and caring for a doll.</p> <p>Represents a simple isolated event. No true sequencing. Pretends to pour and drink milk.</p> <p>Needs realistic props.</p> <p>Stacks and knocks down blocks.</p> <p>Fills, pours and dumps sand or water.</p> |
| 2 ¹ / ₂ Years | <p>Begins to represent less frequently experienced events that are personally significant: going to school, the doctor or shopping.</p> <p>Represents a simple isolated event. No true sequencing. Pretends to give sick doll a shot. Puts pretend food in a shopping bag.</p> <p>Needs realistic props when pretending.</p> <p>Takes short roles: mommy, daddy, teacher or doctor</p> |

| Age | Symbolic Play |
|--|---|
| 3 Years | <p>Represents familiar and less familiar experiences. Uses true sequences. Pretends to cook dinner, serve dinner, eat dinner and clean up.</p> <p>Does not plan. Play evolves.</p> <p>Provides new outcomes for play sequences.</p> <p>Shows associative play.</p> |
| 3-3 ¹ / ₂ Years | <p>Represents familiar and less familiar experiences using smaller props: doll house, car wash and gas station.</p> <p>Uses constructive play to serve imaginative themes. Builds houses, walls, fences and roads.</p> <p>Begins to use one object to represent another. Uses a stick as a sword, a blanket as a tent or a box as a castle.</p> <p>Performs simple plays with doll or puppet.</p> |
| 3 ¹ / ₂ -4 Years | <p>Begins to plan play experiences. Problem-solves events. Thinks about the future.</p> <p>Acts out scenes with dolls and puppets.</p> <p>Builds more elaborate structures for imaginative play.</p> |
| 5 Years | <p>Plans a sequence of actions to represent realistic and imaginative experiences.</p> <p>Organizes materials and other children to implement the plan.</p> <p>Coordinates several events simultaneously.</p> <p>Shows strong imagination.</p> <p>Engages in cooperative play.</p> |

Adapted from Westby, C. (1980). Assessment of Cognitive and Language Abilities Through Play. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 11, 164-166.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

DEFINITION

An open-ended question is a form of questioning that allows the user to stimulate children's thinking and prompt them to use longer and more complex language. Research shows frequent use of open-ended questions has a very positive effect on both cognitive and language development. It helps children learn to think more deeply about an idea, give an opinion and volunteer their own ideas. When open-ended questions and expansions are used together, they become powerful tools for teaching language.

PURPOSES

An open-ended question:

- Has no right or wrong answer.

- Is child-focused. The child retains the assertive role during communication and is free to explore the idea of interest.

- Allows the user to prompt more complex and meaningful language.

- Encourages critical thinking.

- Is natural and easy to learn.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

In addition to open-ended questions, speakers often use closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions have a right or wrong answer and usually require a very short answer. Adults naturally use both kinds of questions when talking with children. However, if we want our children to become language experts, we must ask them twice as many open-ended questions as we do closed ended questions.

EXAMPLES OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions usually begin with phrases like:

WHAT: What do you think...? What do you know about ...? What is going on here?

HOW: How did that happen? How did he do ...? How do you know ...?

WHY: Why did you do ...? Why did ... happen? I wonder why ...?

EXAMPLES OF CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS

Closed-ended questions often result in one or two word responses. Adults use them when they expect an immediate and short response. Closed-ended questions usually begin with phrases like:

DO: Do you want ice cream? Did you lose your money? Does your tummy hurt?

BE: Are you sad? Is he your friend? Were you lost?

WHAT: What is this called? What do you want? What time is it?

LANGUAGE EXPANSIONS

DEFINITION

A language expansion is a form of speaking that allows the user to add meaning or structure to a child's statement. Research shows frequent use of expansions has a very positive effect on language development. It helps children develop richer vocabulary and longer and more complex sentences. It also encourages more talk. When expansions and open-ended questions are used together, they become powerful tools for teaching language.

PURPOSES

An expansion:

- Is child-focused. The child retains the assertive role during communication.
- Helps the user maintain the conversational topic without demanding a response from the child.
- Allows the user to model more complex and meaningful language.
- Is natural and easy to learn.

TYPES OF EXPANSIONS

Expansions either extend the child's sentence structure or the meaning of the statement.

Expanding the Structure

Rephrase the child's phrase or sentence by making it slightly longer or more complex.

LONGER: **Child:** Baby cry.
Teacher or Parent: *The baby cries again.*

MORE COMPLEX: **Child:** The baby cries. She's hungry.
Teacher or Parent: The baby cries because she's hungry.

Expanding the Meaning

Rephrase the child's statement by enlarging on the topic or using more specific vocabulary. Add to or slightly change the child's idea.

EXPANDED TOPIC: **Child:** The baby cries.
Teacher or Parent: The baby must be hungry.

Child: He hit me with the block!
Teacher or Parent: He hurt you with that block.

SPECIFIC VOCABULARY: **Child:** She wants that.
Teacher or Parent: The baby wants the juice bottle.

Child: I need another one of those over there.
Teacher or Parent: You need a block from the basket.

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