

Promoting Communication

Communication is how your child lets you know what they need, and their ability to understand you.

Communication looks different at each age but is always important. Children are born ready and eager to communicate and connect but need your help to learn how. They need to hear lots of sounds and words and have lots of practice. Interacting with you is the best way to do this.

How do children communicate?

0-2 Months: Fusses and cries to tell you they need something, looks at your face, smiles, coos

2-6 Months: Fusses and cries to tell you they need something, smiles and laughs, copy sounds they hear, babbles

6-12 Months: Fusses and cries to tell you they need something, makes more and different sounds (lots of practicing), starts to understand some words and simple phrases (like “no”), responds to their own name, points to things, says a few words but not always clearly

1-2 Years: Fusses and cries to tell you they need something, follows simple instructions, can say more words every month but not always clearly, points, waves bye, starts to use two-word phrases, shake their head “no”

2-3 Years: Fusses and cries to tell you they need something, vocabulary increases, they have a word for almost everything, their words are easier to understand, they ask questions, they use short sentences, follow more complex directions, they tell stories

How to Promote Communication:

- Talk to them face to face.
- Sing songs and tell stories. You may feel silly, but your child needs to hear sounds and words many times before they can use them.
- Talk to your child when you feed, change, or play with them.
- Talk to your child about what you’re doing throughout the day.
- When your child makes a sound or says a word, copy them.
- Play with language. Sing nursery rhymes, and play games with words (peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake).
- Read books together. You can read the words on the page, or talk about the pictures.
- Label places, people, actions, and things.
- Use an interesting and clear voice.
- Add to what your child says. If they say Daddy, say “Yes, Daddy’s home now”.
- Repeat what they say correctly.
- Wait after asking a question.