



Talk to your Baby – Deafness Team

**Top Tips from
The Deafness Team
Speech and Language Therapy**

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You and Your Baby

Your baby may have been diagnosed with a hearing loss through the Newborn Hearing Screening or they may have developed a hearing loss in the months after birth.

Whatever the cause, you may have been through a challenging time realising that your baby has a hearing loss, meeting lots of new professionals and wondering about the future.

This handout aims to give you some practical ideas to support you and to show you that you have a very important role to play in developing your baby's speech, language and communication.



Listening



<p>Hearing Aids</p>	<p>Your baby may have been given hearing aids from a very young age and it is important that they wear them as much as possible and as early as possible.</p> <p>Check the hearing aids or cochlear implant are working properly.</p> <p>Persevere and put the hearing aids back in, if baby takes them out. <i>Be careful to watch they do not put them in their mouth though – as small parts can be a choking hazard.</i></p> <p>With their hearing aids in, your baby will be able to hear some of the sounds around them.</p>
<p>Environment</p>	<p>Keep background noise down and have some quiet time for talking and playing. Turn the TV and radio off, at some points in the day.</p>
<p>Talking Time</p>	<p>Talk to your baby so they can listen to your voice.</p> <p>Use a lively expressive voice, with interesting intonation, so the pitch of your voice goes up and down a lot.</p> <p>Face your baby and speak fairly close to the hearing aid microphone.</p> <p>You may notice that baby becomes still when you are speaking. This is a sign that they are listening to your voice.</p> <p>Later baby will turn to the source of sound so help them to investigate where sounds are coming from –e.g. take them to, and show them the source of sound: the washing machine/ phone ringing/noise from a toy etc.</p>
<p>Play Time</p>	<p>Play with noisy toys and musical instruments. Encourage baby to listen to different beats and rhythms as well as to the sound of different kinds of instrument – e.g. quiet shakers and low drums.</p> <p>Play ready steady go games – e.g. with a jack in the box, to encourage baby to wait and expect a noise or reaction.</p>

Communication

Your baby will communicate with you in **lots of different ways**:

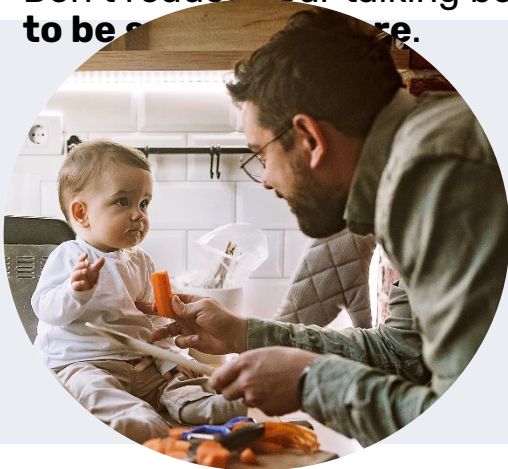


All of these **convey a message** to you as their parent, and **show how your baby is feeling**.

You will often know what baby wants – e.g. feeding or a clean nappy.

In the same way, communicate back with your baby by looking, smiling, and talking.

Don't reduce your talking because your baby has a hearing loss – **they need to be secure**.



Top Tips:

- Get down on baby's level so you are **face to face**.
- Keep your **facial expressions** interesting.
- Baby will enjoy **watching your face** and this will hold their attention and encourage them to watch how your lips move to produce speech.

Understanding

Over time, your baby will start to attach meaning to, and understand the sounds and words they hear. Your baby needs to understand a word before they will say it. For example, babies need to know what a ball is, before they will say the word 'ball'.



Top Tips:

Repetition	Babies need to hear words repeated over and over again to learn their meanings. Don't be afraid to keep repeating words lots of times. This is how they learn.
Emphasis	When you talk to baby, emphasize and stress the key words e.g. "Look here's <u>teddy</u> . Hello <u>teddy</u> ".
Routines	Use every-day routines to introduce and repeat the same words : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bath time – use words like "wash wash/splash/dry/rub rub", • Dinner time – introduce words like "more/all gone/yum yum/milk", • Nappy time – use words like "nappy/smell/finished/all clean!"
Books	Use colourful baby books . Babies love to look at pictures from a young age and this is a great opportunity for you to repeat words for baby to listen to.
Commenting	Talk about what baby is looking at or reaching for – e.g. "Look there's the car/Here's your milk."
Singing	Sing songs and nursery rhymes . This is a great way to teach the meaning of words and babies love to listen to songs and music.
Signing	Signing can be a good way to help your child understand words and develop their language and this is popular with both hearing and deaf babies. Talk to your Speech and Language Therapist or Teacher of the Deaf about how signing fits in with your baby's communication system.

Making Sounds and Words

Babies start to 'coo' and then to make **babbling noises** (mamamam, dadadada) as they **experiment with and use sounds**.

Try **repeating your baby's sounds back to them**, exactly as they made them. This gets baby's attention and creates an interest in communication.

Wait for a response. When your child has made a sound and you have repeated it back to them – just wait. Sometimes it feels as if you are waiting for a very long time, but it is really important to **allow time for baby to respond to you**, so don't jump in too quickly.

This copying and waiting allows baby to **learn about taking turns in communication**. Soon you will be taking turns to make noises – you copying baby and baby copying you.

Baby's babbling should **change over time**.

- They will start off by saying the same sounds e.g. 'mamama', usually with sounds made with two lips (m/b).
- Then sounds made behind the lips e.g. 'dadadada'.
- This will then change to different sounds 'badagaba' as your baby moves closer to saying words.
- Listen for the different sounds baby uses, and keep copying these.

Baby will also start to experiment with different intonation patterns and their voice will **rise and fall** as they continue to experiment with sounds.








This is called '**jargon**', and shows baby is moving closer to using first words.

Again **signing** could help to develop baby's early words, as babies often learn a sign before they learn a word.

This gives them a way to communicate, **relieves frustration** and can give some babies a **head start with their language**. Some babies will use British Sign Language (BSL) to communicate. Talk to your Speech and Language Therapist or Teacher of the Deaf about signing and communication.

Making Sounds and Words (continued)

Top Tips:

	<p>Involve all the family – older brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles. Everyone can listen, copy and talk to baby and this will help them to listen to the tone and sound of different people’s voices.</p>
	<p>As baby makes sounds which begin to resemble real words, listen and interpret these and say the correct word back to them – e.g. Baby says “buh”- parent says or models “ball”; baby says “gu”, parent says “yes- cup”.</p>
	<p>Use a dummy only for sleep time. This can affect your baby’s speech if they begin to talk with a dummy in her mouth and can push speech sounds too far back in the mouth, leading to speech difficulties later.</p>
	<p>Label and describe objects and people around baby. Talk to them as much as possible. Talk talk talk!</p>
	<p>When baby uses more single words, add other words to what they say. This is called ‘extending language’ e.g. baby says one word ‘gone’, parent adds other words “dinner’s gone. All gone now.”</p>
	<p>Remember the professionals are here to help support you in the important role you as parents have to play.</p> <p>Speech and Language Therapists and Teachers of the Deaf work closely together to help to meet your child’s needs and support their language development.</p> <p>Please ask us if you need any further advice/ideas or if you have any questions.</p>
	<p>Above all, have fun with your baby!</p> <p>Enjoy talking and playing with them. This is a special time for you to share together.</p>

Useful Links and Resources:

- National Deaf Children's Society: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/>
- Auditory Verbal UK: <https://www.avuk.org/>
- Videos of BSL signs: <https://www.signbsl.com/>
- Elizabeth Foundation: <https://www.elizabeth-foundation.org/>
- Family centre (for Deaf children in Bristol and surrounding areas): <https://fcdc.org.uk/>

Hearing aid / cochlear impact images created by Ella Bakker for Sirona.
Other images by PowerPoint.

Advice and Support

For further advice and support from a Speech & Language Therapist, please contact our Team. Contact details can be found on our website:

<https://www.sirona-cic.org.uk/children-services/services/school-age-speech-and-language-therapy-service/>

This service is provided by Sirona care & health as part of the Community Children's Health Partnership.