

Early Communication (Infants)

What is Early Communication?

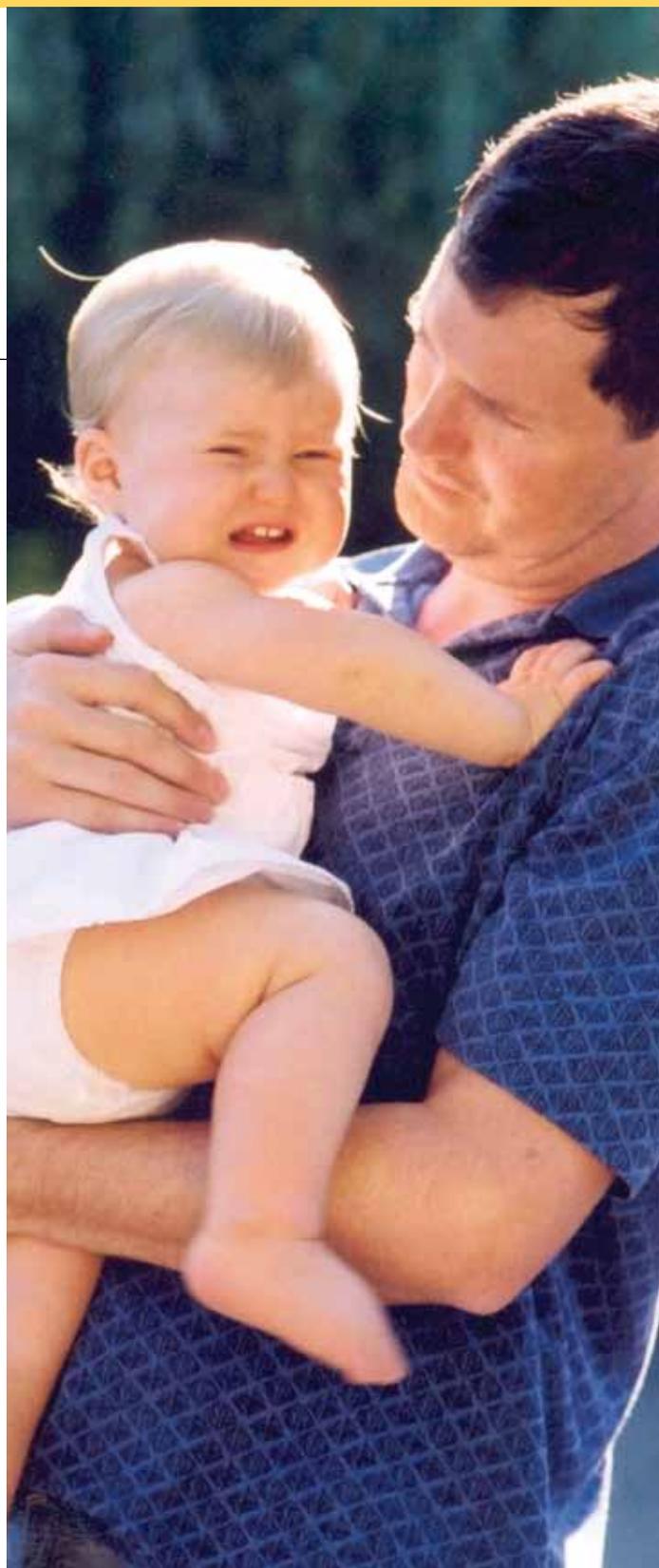
Infants have many needs and they are born with ways to let you know what they are. Early communication with infants is all about recognizing and responding to their needs.

Long before babies can talk, they are able to communicate with the people in their lives. In fact, babies are born communicating, as shown by their first cries just moments after birth. While these earliest forms of communication are important for expressing needs, they are also the foundation for relationship development with parents and caregivers.

Why Early Communication Matters

Early communication matters because it is how babies let parents know what they need.

- ★ It is important to consistently respond to a baby's cues (crying, fussing, facial expressions, and sounds) to help build a connection. Your responses may include feeding, a diaper change, swaddling, smiling, talking, or simply picking up your child.
- ★ In the first months of life, you cannot "spoil" a child. Most babies cry because they need something. If your baby is crying, pick him up.
- ★ The foundation for success in school and throughout life is created in infancy through supportive, responsive interactions with parents and caregivers.



What Parents Can Do

- ★ Right from birth, talk with your child! This helps her to connect with you and get her started on the path to learning language.
- ★ Before your baby can talk, play sound games with her. If she babbles, babble back!
- ★ As your baby gets older, remember that it will take time for her to learn how to pronounce words correctly just as it may take time for you to understand what she is trying to say.
- ★ If you think she might be trying to say a real word, say it for her, and see if she agrees that you've said the right one. Younger children may know the word before they can say it.
- ★ If he says "wabbit," don't criticize him. Just say the word correctly, "Yes, that's a rabbit."
- ★ To help build vocabulary, describe objects with lots of details. But use short sentences!
- ★ Don't add too many new words all at once. For example, if your child says "Car car". You could say "Yes, that's a blue car! And look, it has black wheels."
- ★ Read to your child every day. Reading introduces him to a wide range of sounds and words. Find books that you both think are fun, and stop before your child gets bored.
- ★ Help your child to hear and say the sounds of language by reading books together, singing songs, and learning playful nursery rhymes.
- ★ If you're concerned that your child has difficulty with speech, talk to your child's healthcare provider.

