

# Supporting Language & Literacy

## 9 Months: Building Vocabulary Through Play and Repetition

Learning how to talk is not a passive process. Babies learn language by playing with it. Their mouths must practice forming sounds and put those sounds together to form words and sentences. They need to imitate you several times and they need lots of feedback. To learn language, they need you! When it comes to your baby learning language, no electronic device or app can replace your lap.

### TIPS & ACTIVITIES



**Grocery Store Explore:**  
Point out and tell baby about what all you see and are shopping for.

Play peek-a-boo.



Use new words many times and in different contexts.



Describe what baby is looking at or playing with.



Pair words or simple sound patterns with gestures, e.g. clapping or saying “ba-ba-ba” to encourage your child to utilize consonant sounds.



Repeat baby’s sounds and say a word using the sound. Baby says, “Baba,” when they see a bottle, you say, “Yes. Baba. Bottle.”



## Common Language Milestones

Recognizes simple requests, their name, and names of familiar people and objects

Shows interest with gestures (pointing, lifting arms to be picked up) and sounds

Uses an increased variety of sounds, like mamama, upupup, or bababa

Copies sounds and gestures of others, like shaking head for “no”

Participates in games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake

Participates in two-way communication

# Early Detection is Intervention

**Your child is always learning.**

As a caregiver, you have an amazing opportunity to guide them on a path to success!



**Talk with your child's healthcare provider if your child:**



Is not responsive to sounds or voices

Is not interested in interacting with others

Does not respond to own name

Does not maintain eye contact during playful interactions

Does not babble



Source: Pathways.org

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Pathways: Communication](#)

[Harvard University: Center on the Developing Child](#)

[Cox Campus](#)

[The Basics](#)

[CDC Milestones](#)