

ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE UNDERSTANDING

You can start using Signing with your baby as early as you like.



Babies love watching their parents so it's never too soon to start.



Introduce signs that are relevant to your baby for e.g. milk, mummy, daddy, teddy, bed/sleep, Begin with just 5 signs and try and use them consistently. When you feel confident with those you can add more 1 at a time.



When your baby is looking at something say the word and if you know it the sign e.g. 'it's a dog' [sign - dog].



Try and keep your language simple and only use a few words at a time when you're talking to your baby.

Use simple sentences. Follow their lead and comment on what they are interested in.



As well as using signs use natural gestures e.g. waving, clapping etc. Put their hands in your hands and show them how to wave etc.

As you are doing daily tasks give them a commentary on what you are doing e.g. 'mummy's washing the plates'.

When bathing or dressing, name body parts or clothes. Make it fun e.g. 'wash your tummy' and splash some water on their tummy etc.

HEAD



Promoting
communication
in babies before
12 months



Remember the most important thing is to have fun interacting with your baby!

These activities are just suggestions and should be enjoyable for you and your baby.

Before babies can speak they are already learning a lot about communication and the world and the people around them.

Babies learn through interacting with their carers and copying them so those are the things we've focused on.

ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE COPYING

When playing together copy what your baby is doing. If they stick their tongue out you stick your tongue out!

As your baby gets older you can copy their play e.g. banging 2 bricks together.



Play with sensory toys together e.g. crunchy fabrics, bubbles in the bath, hands in paint. Copy what your child is doing.

Sing action rhymes together and do the actions. You can start action rhymes from birth. Your child will enjoy watching you and listening to your voice even if they can't join in yet.



Rhymes such as 'row row row your boat' are good as your baby is facing you and you can help them do the actions as you're holding their hands.



Use rhymes with animal noises in e.g. Old McDonald and encourage your baby to join in with the noises as they get older.

Look at yourselves in the mirror together. Play pulling funny faces in the mirror. Your baby may not be able to copy you yet but they will enjoy watching.

ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE INTERACTION

Sit face to face with your baby so they can look at your face and make eye contact.



Get down to their level whether they are in your arms, on the floor, in the buggy or sat up in the highchair.

Play peep-o games with baby. Hide your face behind your hands and say 'peepo' as you look out. With older babies you can hide your baby's face under a cloth and encourage them to pull it off and say peepo!

HAVE MADE UP CONVERSATIONS - WHEN YOUR BABY BABBLES TO YOU, REPLY TO THEM EVEN IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANTED. USE AN ANIMATED TONE OF VOICE AS THIS WILL HOLD YOUR BABIES ATTENTION FOR LONGER.

Take turns in games. With little babies that might be sitting them facing you and taking turns making babbling sounds. When they are able to sit, you could take turns pushing a button on a noisy toy or shaking a noise maker.



Roll a ball or chunky car between you. You can do this with babies who are not yet sitting unsupported if another adult is there to help them.