

look say sing play

Look at what your baby is focussing on and how they react.

Try this...

0–6 months: Place your baby on their back and dangle safe toy just out of their reach. Encourage them to follow the objects with their eyes and head or to reach for them. Comment on how hard they try, “You almost touched the toy!”

6–12 months: Hold the mirror up to your child’s face and ask, “Who’s that baby?” Then say their name. Pull the mirror away and watch them. Do they smile? Wave their hands and feet? Do they reach out for the mirror? Comment on what they’re telling you with their actions.

12–18 months: Go on a colour hunt with your baby. Say something like, “Let’s find all the things in the room that are yellow!” Point out what you find and describe it:, “Here is a yellow book! It has a shiny, smooth cover! We look at books before your nap.” See what interests them and talk about that – children will match colours from 2 years and name from 3 years.

18–24 months: We’re surrounded by words that are ready for reading. Pick signs or posters in the room and read aloud to your child and talk to them about what each means. You can do this as you’re out and about too.

The science bit: *These activities help your baby to develop important skills like focus, self-control and persistence. Talking about what you see and read anywhere and everywhere helps them develop a rich, diverse vocabulary. Children need to hear around 2,000 words a day.*



Is your child in the mood for playing?

Yes: Smiling, mirroring, hands relaxed, laughing, making babbling/vocal noises

No: Crying, looking away, drowsy, light or deep sleep and unsettled and hiccupping or possetting.

If your baby doesn’t want to play right now, take a breather, have a cuddle and take their cue.

NSPCC

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

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Say what you're doing and copy the sounds your child makes.

Try this...

0–6 months: Get on your baby's level and look at the world through their eyes. What might they see while lying on their back or tummy? Remember babies vision is only clear from 30 inches (breast to face) and they have limited colour vision. Babies prefer white, black and red and faces. Notice where they're looking, point at it, and use words to describe what they're seeing, noticing any little responses they make. Talk about what you see too.

6–12 months: If your child says "Ba," repeat the sound back to them. Then add on to it, "Ba, ba, ba." Do they try to copy your sounds? Add a new sound next, "Ba, ba, MA." Do they notice the change? Do they try to repeat it? Go back and forth repeating each other's sounds and building on them.

12–18 months: Invite your child to help put items IN and OUT of the box. Say the words IN and OUT to describe your actions and see how your baby reacts as they learn these concepts. You can also do this at home with the laundry!

18–24 months: Make different sounds for each part of their face. Touch their nose and say, "Your nose says 'beep!'" or say, "Here's your chin. Pop!" and touch their chin. Then give them a turn to touch your face. Encourage them to make the sounds with you.

The science bit: *Your voice is one of your child's favourite things to listen to. Having back and forth 'conversations' with your child encourages communication, using sounds and actions to "talk" to you. When you play with words and sounds together, you build language skills and show them how much fun learning can be!*



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Sing along to your favourite tunes or make up your own!

Try this...

0–6 months: Use one of the song cards/nursery rhyme books to sing with your baby. Pay attention to how they tell you they want more singing. Do they turn their head toward you? Smile? Move? What do they do to say “enough”? Cry? Turn away? Take note of how to respond to their cues now and in the future!

6–12 months: Is your child making lots of sounds? Talk back to them by repeating their sounds or describing what they’re doing using a sing-song voice. Do they respond by kicking their feet, waving their arms or making more sounds? Together, you’re telling your own sing-song story!

12–18 months: Make up a silly song about your child. You can sing something like, “Here is your little arm. Here is your little leg.” As they get older, you can sing about their left elbow or right hand and encourage them to sing along.

18–24 months: When sharing a song with your child, place them on your lap and move their body to the rhythms and words in the song. You can bounce, wiggle, or move from side to side with them as you sing. Occasionally stop your movements and watch how they respond. Do they smile, clap or ask for more? Do it again!

The science bit: *Children’s brains are wired to hear you talk in a sing-song voice. When you talk slowly and stretch the sounds out in a musical way, their eyes light up and their heart rates increase. Toddlers who hear sing-song voices smile more often—proof that YOU are making connections and building a brain!*



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National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Patron: HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO Founded in 1884. Incorporated by Royal Charter RC000374. Registered charity number 216401 (England and Wales) and SC037717 (Scotland). The children and adults pictured are volunteers. Photography by Tom Hull. J20191010.

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Play simple games and see what your baby enjoys...

Try this...

0–6 months: Put your baby on their back or tummy and shake something that makes noise, like keys. Do they follow the sound with their eyes or head? What do they do when you shake fast or slow? If they do something, copy that action or sound and have a conversation without words.

6–12 months: Gently blow on your child's face and hair. Ask them, "Do you feel the wind?" Notice if they seem to like the sensation. If so, blow with long and short breaths. Make your pauses in between long and short, too. How long can you and your baby play?

12–18 months: Hold your child facing you and gently sway them back and forth, saying: "Tick tock, tick tock, little cuckoo clock. Now it's striking one! Cuckoo!" Bounce them up and down once. Now have the clock strike two, saying "cuckoo" twice and bounce twice. Add more verses with higher numbers!

18–24 months: With a piece of clothing or a towel, cover your child's toes. Ask them, "Where are your toes?" Wait and see how they respond. Do they look at you? Kick or point at their feet? Quickly uncover their toes and say, "There they are!" Do this with different parts of their body.

The science bit: *By playing these games you're creating a fun space for learning while building a caring and trusting relationship with your child. You're also helping your baby learn to control their attention, an ability that develops focus and self-control.*



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