

## Speech and Language Traits of the Four to Twelve Month Old



### By age four months, your child will...

- startle to a sudden sound
- look for the source of new sounds
- calm down to a soothing out-of-sight voice
- laugh, gurgle, coo with familiar people
- use his voice to get attention

### By eight months, your child will...

- turn his head toward sound
- widen his eyes to a loud sound
- enjoy noise toys
- babble to others
- frequently use syllables such as “ba,” “da,” “ka”
- produce four or more different sounds

### By twelve months, your child will...

- turn quickly to his name
- use a variety of pitches in the voice
- listen, bounce or talk with music
- use jargon that sounds like real sentences
- play “peek-a-boo”
- imitate familiar words
- understand simple instructions
- recognize words as symbols for objects, i.e., say “meow” for cat, “brum, brum” for car

## You can stimulate your infant’s speech and language by...

- responding to your child’s coos, gurgles, and babbling
- talking to your child as you care for him or her throughout the day
- reading colorful books to your child every day
- keeping your speech rather simple and concrete
- reciting nursery rhymes and singing songs
- showing interest in all the different sounds you hear (ice clinking in a glass, doorbell ringing, rain falling)
- teaching your child the names of everyday items and familiar people
- playing simple games with your child such as “peek-a-boo” and “pat-a-cake”
- playing simple music for your child

Your child’s speech and language development depends on his or her ability to hear. A hearing loss can interrupt or delay the ability to communicate. All children, even newborns and young babies, can have their hearing tested. If you suspect a hearing problem, ask your doctor to refer your child to an audiologist. Seek prompt medical treatment if you suspect your child may have an ear infection.

Remember, if you have any questions about your child’s hearing, call an audiologist, the hearing professional.

Provided for you by the **Speech & Hearing Board of the Baptist Health Care Foundation**, a United Way Agency

If this information raises concerns regarding your child you may call one of the following for further information:



**SPEECH & HEARING BOARD**

- Baptist Hospital Speech & Hearing Clinic  
(850) 434-4957
- Speech Department of West Florida Hospital  
(850) 494-6140
- Audiology Clinic Escambia District Schools  
(850) 453-7472