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Communicate With Your Baby

Read this page for tips on communicating with your baby who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Communicating with your baby

Communicating with a baby with hearing loss is almost the same as with a baby who hears normally.

- **Talk to your baby.**
 - Even if he can't hear what you say, your feeling show on your face and body. They tell him that you love him and are there to take care of him.
 - Talking teaches your baby to look at your face to communicate. That will help him as he learns to read lips and/or speak.
 - Even if you use sign language, your baby will need to watch your face.
- **Show your feelings by cuddling, touching and smiling.**
- **Use lots of facial expressions and gestures.**



Help your baby learn language

Remember, your baby sees more than he hears.

Use these tips to communicate through your baby's eyes:

- **Take time to respond to your baby's needs.**

Try to figure out what he's trying to tell you.
This lets your baby know you care about him.
- **Use different senses to send messages to your baby.**
 - Play games that use touch.
 - Move your face and body around.
 - Use smiles and other facial expressions to get ideas across.
- **Notice where your baby is looking and what he's interested in.**

Talk about what your baby is interested in.
- **Watch your baby's movements.**

Babies move their arms and legs around to tell you they're excited. Or your baby may be telling you he's ready to play.

- **If your baby wants to stop playing, let him.**
Sometimes babies need to rest for awhile.
- **Get your baby's attention before you start talking to him.**
 - Move your hands or body so your baby can see you talking while he's still looking at a toy.
 - Move a toy near your baby's face, then move it to your face so he looks at you while you talk about it.
 - Tap on the toy several times before you say something about it.
 - Tap on your baby to get him to look at you, or wait for him to look up on his own.

Remember!

Have fun! Try not to let any worries about hearing loss stop you from having a good time with your baby.

Once your baby starts to learn words or signs

As your baby starts to learn language, change how you talk or sign with him:

- Start using short sentences.
 - Use 1, 2, or 3 words or signs at a time.
- Point or tap on things as you say their names.
- Repeat words or sentences.
- If you're using sign language, use some **fingerspelling**, too.
- Don't try to tell your baby too many different things at once.

These tips come from Dr. Patricia Spencer, a researcher at Gallaudet University.

[Read the entire report](http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/e-docs/visual-conversations/index.html) for more details
(<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/e-docs/visual-conversations/index.html>).

Learn more

Go to this website about [communicating with your baby](http://babyhearing.org/LanguageLearning/BuildConversations/index.asp)
(<http://babyhearing.org/LanguageLearning/BuildConversations/index.asp>).

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You can find this page online at:
<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/tips/baby.jsp>