

Reading Books to your child will assist with language development as the structures and words used in books are more varied than those in speech.

(Snow, Burns, Giffin, 1998)  
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**Fostering  
Conversation**

**The earliest years in life  
are essential for  
vocabulary development.**

(Booth, A.E. (2009). *Casual supports for early word learning*. *Child Development*, 80 (4), 1243-1250.)

Language development begins in utero as the fetus hears the pitch of his mother's voice and others in the environment. Conversation is the development of a language system and skills. This process called neural commitment, is when neurons in the brain pick up on the patterns in one's language and become tuned in to them. A baby is born to hear distinct sounds of all languages. By age one a child loses the ability to hear sounds that are not found in his native language. Sounds that are not heard frequently are lost. Sorting out sounds (phonemes) happens with repeated exposure. Your baby's brain is shaped by what he hears.

*Stamm, J. (2007). Bright from the start.  
Gotham Books, New York, NY.*

Children need opportunities to hear new vocabulary words. They also need to use new words. For example, when a child says, /dg/ for the word dog, a parent can say, "Did you say dog?" Further explanation of words is encouraged. A parent could use this as a learning opportunity to say, "Yes, that is a dog; look at his furry body."

Multiple exposures to words are needed for retention.

*Wasik, B. & Hindman, A. (2015) Talk alone won't close the 30-million word gap. Kappan, March 96(6), 50-54.*

## BABY COMMUNICATION



Crying is a way of communication. Your response provides positive reinforcement that helps develop an understanding of the role of language. When a baby cries they are seeking attention. When a baby laughs and you laugh back this is a form of nonverbal communication. This is the beginning of taking turns for conversation.