

# Learning to Talk

“When acquiring language, children gain the ability to [express] ideas and feelings, share them with others, and respond to the ideas and actions of other people.” ~ Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines

## Stage 1 and 2 (Birth to around 6 months)

### I will:

- learn about talking by making sounds when you speak to me or copying the sounds you make.
- use cooing, gurgling, and babbling sounds.
- make sounds to show pleasure, discomfort, pain, and to help you understand my wants and needs.
- change my pitch or tone to express different things.

### Essential Ingredient for Language Development

*The key ingredient to my development is the “serve and return” relationship between me and my parents or other caregivers.*

**Serve:** *Talk, play, and make eye contact with me often.*

**Return:** *Follow my lead, show interest, and allow time for me to respond to you.*

## Stage 3 (6 to around 12 months)

### I will:

- use a variety of simple gestures to communicate. I may lift my arms when I want up or shake my head or arms when I’m all done with something.
- show the same emotion as others. I may cry when others cry or laugh when others are laughing.
- understand basic words, like “hi” and “bye-bye” or “ball.”
- respond to simple questions like “Where’s mommy?” by pointing or gesturing.
- babble using sounds such as “mama” or “dada.”

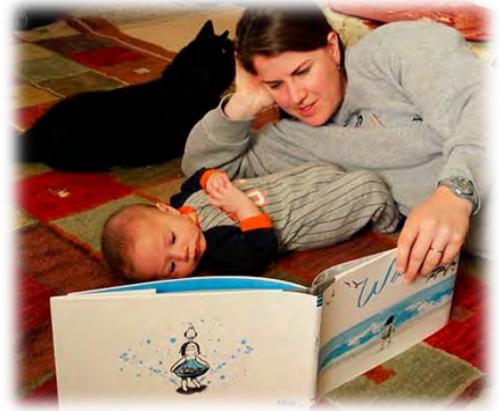
### **My caregivers help me learn to talk by:**

- listening to me and responding by imitating my sounds and gestures, then waiting for me to respond again.
- describing what you are doing as you care for and interact with me, like saying “I’m going to pick you up.”
- playing games like peek-a-boo, and asking me questions like “Where’s the ball?”
- using different facial expressions and a variety of words and gestures when interacting with me.
- expanding on what I may be saying by giving me the words. For instance, when I’m reaching for an object I can’t reach, ask “Do you want the car?”
- watching me and describing for me what I may be feeling. For example, say “You look hungry, let’s go get your bottle ready.”

## Stage 4 (12 to around 24 months)

### I will:

- begin using the same sound to refer to a person, place, or thing, like “ba” for ball or “ju” for juice.
- imitate and repeat simple words, then use single words to communicate.
- string together sounds, or babble using various tones or pitches.
- begin to use simple words to communicate. I may point outside and say “Go” for “I want to go outside.”
- understand more words than I can say.
- be able to follow one step directions and answer questions like “Where’s your nose?”
- use more complex gestures with words to better communicate my needs.
- be able to follow simple directions around the end of this stage. I will also be able to put one or two words together, like saying “More milk,” or “Up please” for “I want up please.”



## Stage 5 (24 to around 36 months)

### I will:

- learn to say new words almost every day!
- combine simple words to make phrases and short sentences like “Go bye-bye now?” or “More juice please.”
- use words to pretend play, such as talking on the phone or caring for a stuffed animal or doll.
- follow two step directions. I can play simple games, like “Where’s your eyes and nose?”
- answer simple questions like “Where’s mommy?” or “Where did the doggie go?”
- begin asking lots of questions about how things work and using words like “why.”

### My caregivers help me learn to talk by:

- talking and singing with me during daily routines. It will make them more fun!
- asking me open-ended questions that don’t have a “yes” or “no” answer, like “Where is daddy?”
- modeling more complex sentences. For instance, if I say “Jane go bye-bye?” respond with “Did Jane go bye-bye?”
- pretend playing with me. Help me bake a cake, fix a car, or fly in an airplane.
- saying my name, colors, and numbers when talking and playing with me.
- reading to me often and asking me questions, like “What happened to the dog?” or “Are they happy or sad?”

*To learn more about learning to talk, view the Resources and References found at the end of these materials. If you have a concern about a child’s language development, you can learn more about [Developmental Milestones](#) by dialing Idaho CareLine at 2-1-1 or visiting <http://www.211.idaho.gov>.*