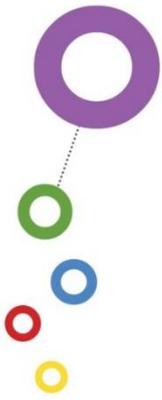
The page features a decorative border composed of large purple circles and smaller circles in yellow, red, blue, and green, connected by dotted lines. The main title is centered in a light blue rectangular box.

# Literacy Primer: for Parents & Caregivers

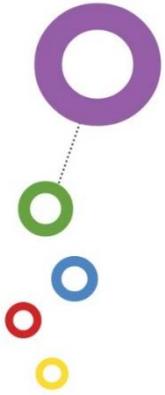
A Research Summary &  
Effective Practices

- **Billie Enz, Jill Stamm, and DyAnn O'Brien**
- New Directions Institute part of Arizona Children's Association



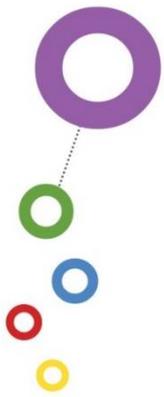
# Today

- Expand understanding of language development and best age and stage support
- Discuss how and when reading develops and review best age and stage books
- Examine children's understanding of print and the progression of writing and best ways to support this development



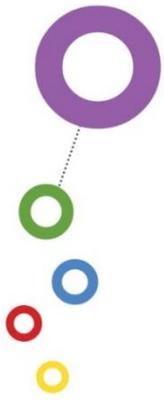
# When Do Children Learn Language?





## At birth

- Human babies can recognize and show a preference to their native/mother tongue.
- However they are still capable of hearing and making all of the phonemes (sounds) of all human languages.

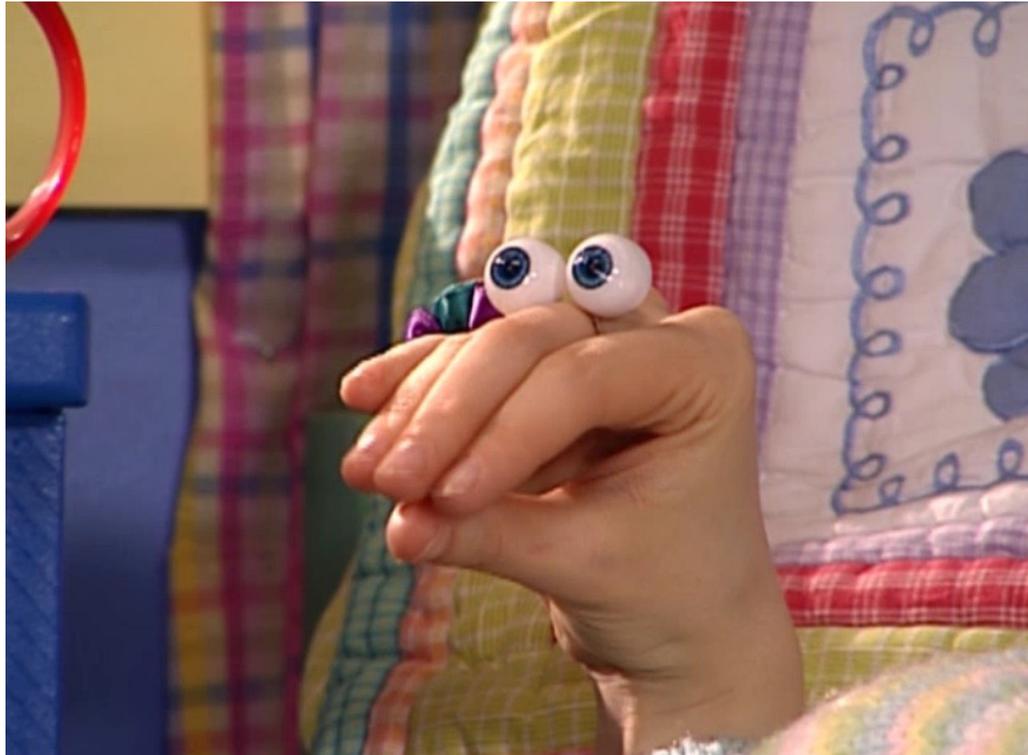


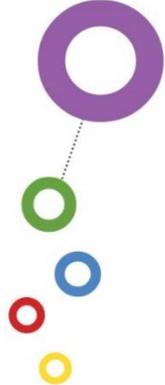
## Multiple Languages

If exposed to a second language, infants will learn the phonemes of that language, too!

It is now thought that bi-lingualism is as natural as monolingualism!

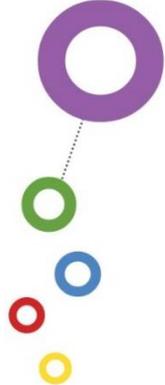
# Second-language support preschool years





## Summary - Once again...

- ▶ Children begin to hear the sounds of language at about 24 weeks in utero.
- ▶ Children recognize and prefer the sounds of their native tongue(s) at birth.
- ▶ Universal Linguists - children are able to hear and make all the sounds of all the world languages until about 6-7 months when they become *culture-bound language specialists*.
- ▶ If children hear multiple languages in their home/school, they will become multi-lingual.



# Language Progression Birth to Three

Developmental milestones are critically important as they:

- Give parents observable norms for healthy development.
- Offer ideas for supporting children's language development.



# Parentese

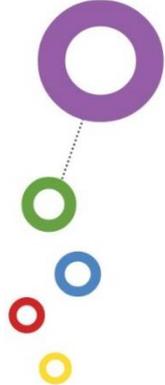


# Imitation



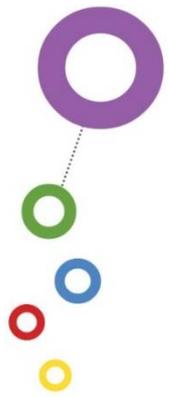
# Two-Way Conversation





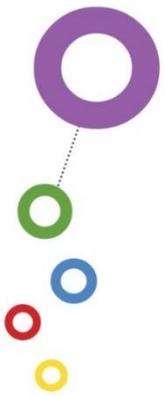
# The Importance of Interaction



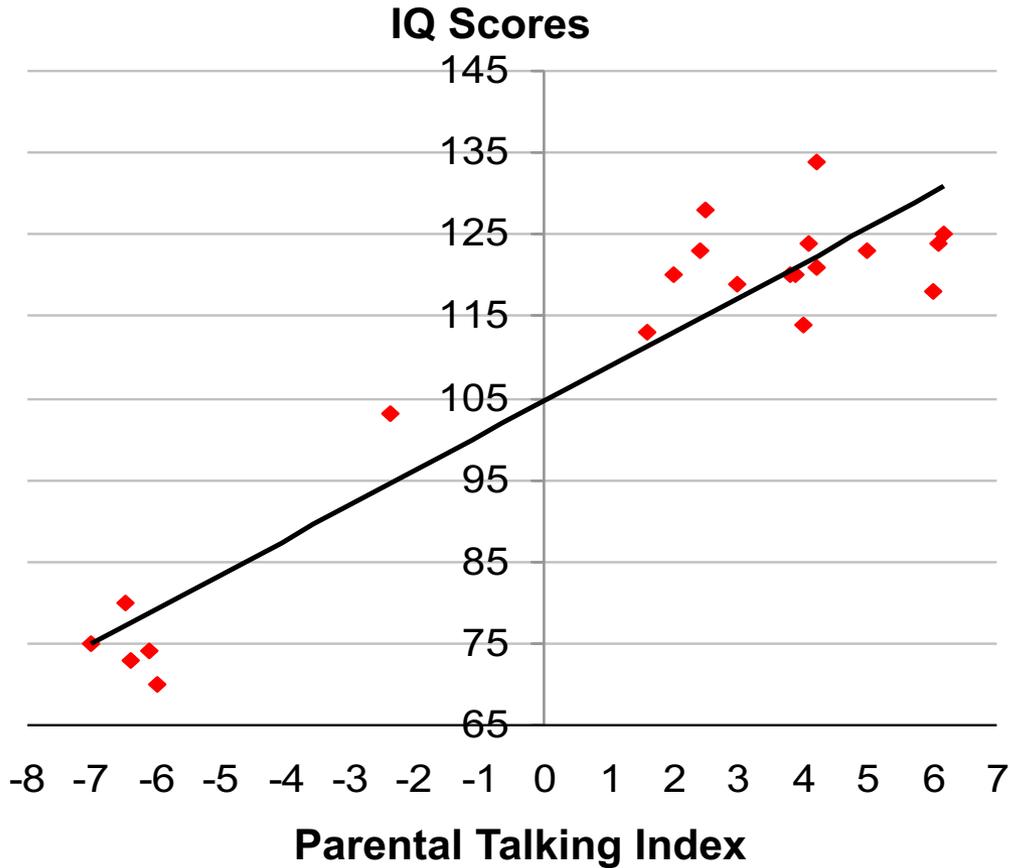


# Hart and Risley Study Parents and Baby Interactions

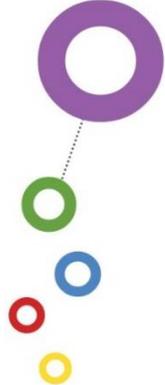
- ▶ Lower SES - 616 words per hour
- ▶ Middle SES - 1,251 words per hour
- ▶ High SES - 2,153 words per hour



# Regardless of SES...



The amount of face to face talk matters



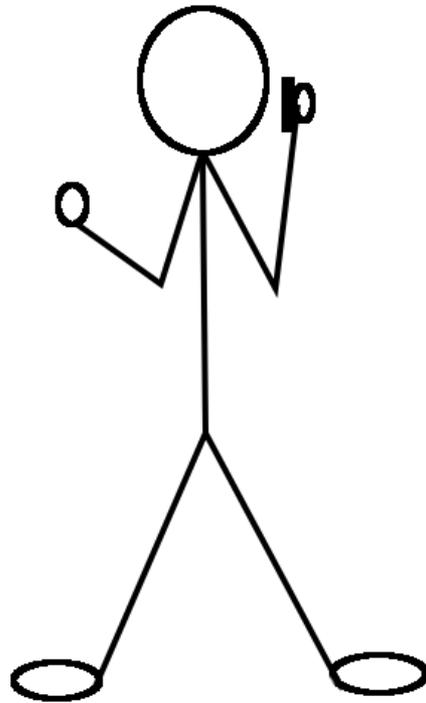
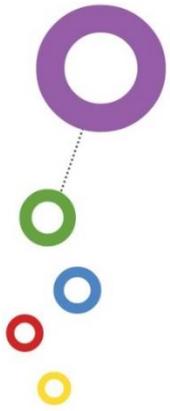
# Examples of Language Interactions

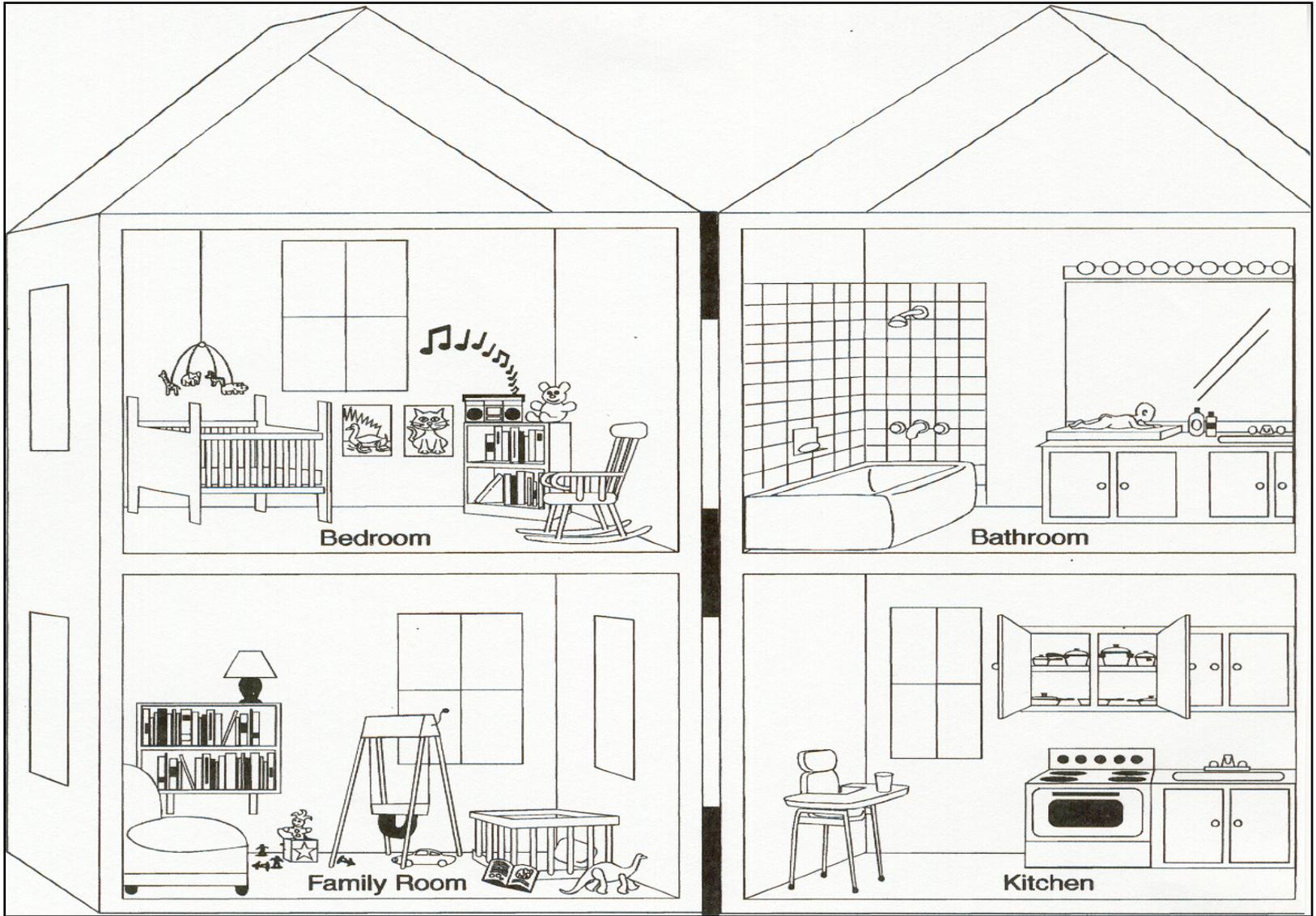
**Mom 1. *Ok Crystal, let's eat.***

**Mom 2. *Ok Paulie, it's time to eat our lunch. Let's see what we are having? Yes, let's have carrots.***

**Mom 3. *Ok Teryl, it's lunchtime. Are you hungry?***

***Mommy is so hungry! Let's see what we have in the refrigerator today. What is this? It's orange. Could it be peaches? Could it be apricots? Let's see!! See the picture on the jar? That's right it's carrots.***



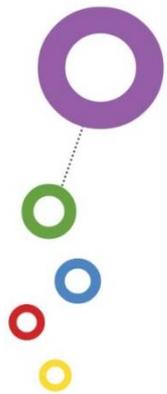


Bedroom

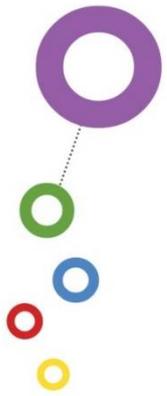
Bathroom

Family Room

Kitchen

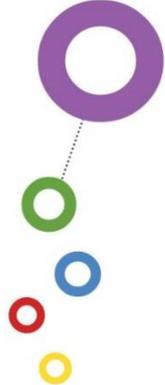


<h3>Bedroom Talk</h3> <p>Label and describe toys, talk about their colors, textures, and special features, like the sounds and motions, Tickle Me Elmo makes.</p> <p>Label and describe clothes, talk about the color, style, and textures. For instance, Today we are wearing a warm, wooly sweater because it is cool outside.</p>	<h3>Bathroom Talk</h3> <p>Label and describe the activities of bath time, for instance the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>●slippery soap,</li><li>●warm water,</li><li>●bubbles in the water,</li><li>●tickles of washing your toes</li></ul> <p>With water toys talk about the pouring water, the swimming diver, the floating duck.</p>
<h3>Family room Talk</h3> <p>Talk about the toys, read storybooks, watch children’s videos and discuss the characters, watch children’s television and discuss the actions of characters.</p> <p>Ask child to pick up toys by describing them. For instance, Jose, please pick up the toy that has four blue wheels.</p>	<h3>Kitchen Talk</h3> <p>Talk about the food you are preparing for meals, the color, texture, smell and taste. Talk about how small you cutting the pieces, how you are cooking the food.</p> <p>Describe how to set the table, demonstrate the please and thank you of sharing food at the table.</p>



# How Do Children Learn to Read ?



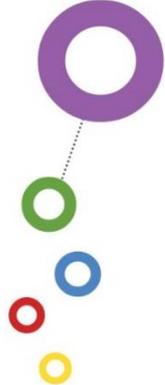


## Pointing and Gazing

- Children are capable of learning 12 new words a day with only a single exposure.
- However, this requires an attentive and responsive adult.

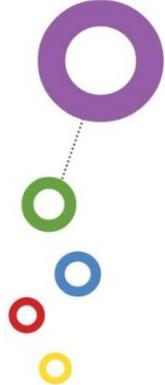
# Joint Attention – Shared Visual Gaze





## Story book reading ...Shared-Visual Gaze

- May be one reason reading picture books to children has such a significant impact to children's vocabulary and subsequent IQ.
- When does a giraffe just walk across your front room?



# Meaningful Differences

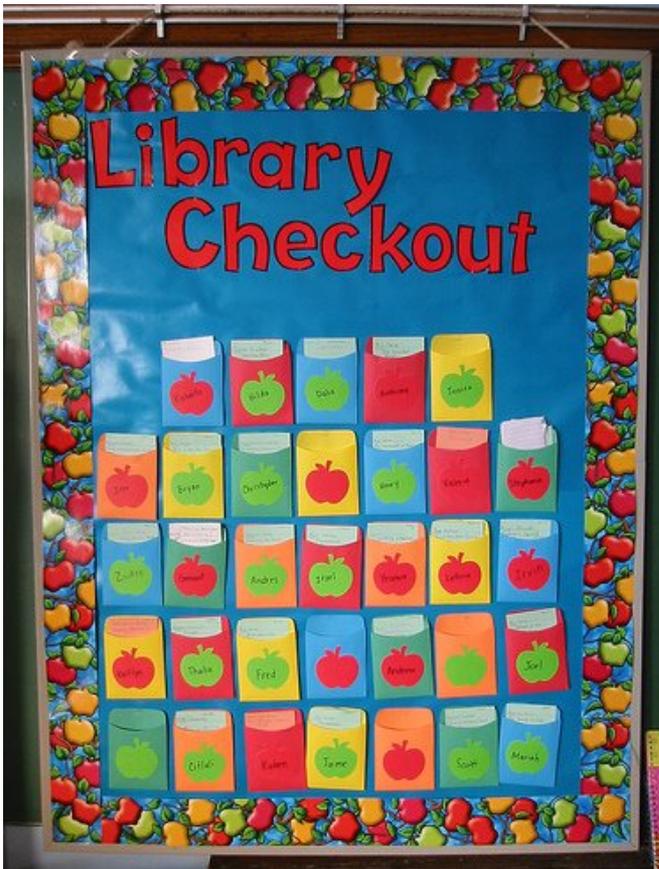
Number of	Low SES	Middle to High SES
Books in home	1	54
1-1 reading	25 hours by K	1500 hours by K
Words heard	13 million by K	45 million by K
Letters recognized	2 letters by K	20-26 letters by K

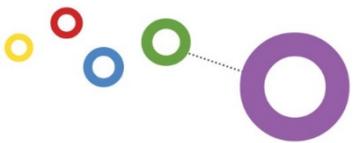


Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study - Birth Cohort (ECLS-B).  
Washington, DC: Child Trends, 2009



# Creating Access: Classroom Lending Library

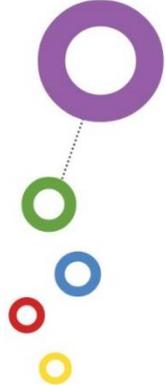




## Creating Access: Home Visiting

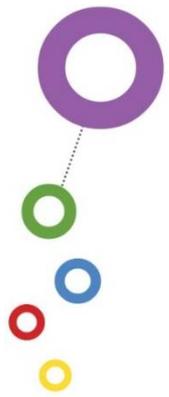


- 1 concept - theme
- 3 related books
- 5 new vocabulary words
  - Identify – write on card inside front page of book
- 10-15 minute opportunities to read books each day!



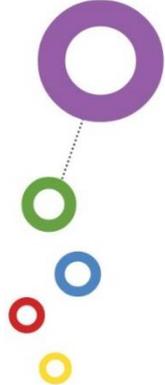
How Can We Help Close this Gap?





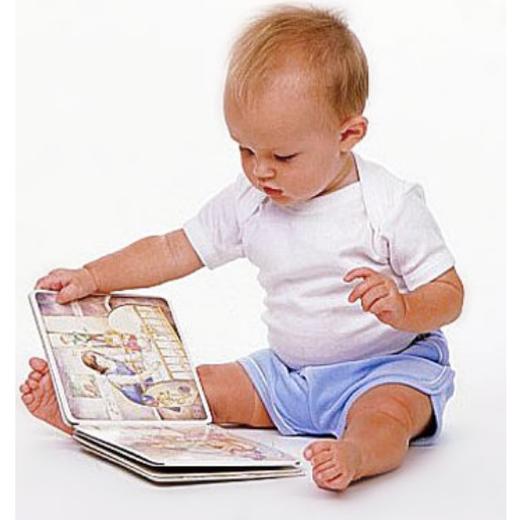
# Reading by Ages and Stages

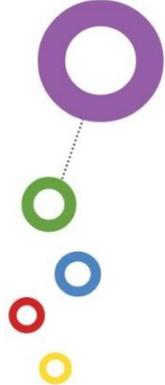




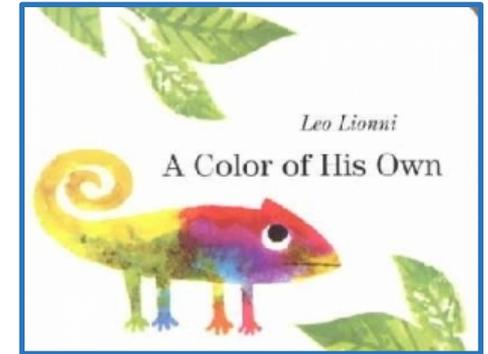
## Frequency over Duration

- ▶ At least **daily**, becoming a routine, habit for both parent, caregiver and child.
  - ▶ 5 to 10 minutes each session - Birth to age 1.
  - ▶ 10 to 15 minutes each session – ages 1 to 2
  - ▶ 15 minutes plus each session – from age 2+
- ▶ You can read multiple times a day, and
- ▶ Children can “read” on their own all they want!

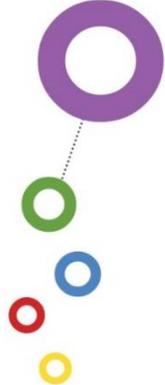




# Interactive Reading



- ▶ **Gigi:** *Bree, look at the special animal. [Pointing to the cover] What do you think it is?*
- ▶ **Bree:** *It's a lizard.*
- ▶ **Gigi:** *Yes, you are right, but is a special lizard called a chameleon. A chameleon can change colors. What colors does he have?*
- ▶ **Bree:** *He is lots of colors, yellow, purple, blue, red. He looks mad. Gi, why is he mad?*
- ▶ **Gigi:** *I don't know, but the title says A Color of His Own, maybe the chameleon wants...?*
- ▶ **Bree:** *His own color?*
- ▶ **Gigi:** *That is a great guess. But I wonder what color that would be? Can you turn the page Bree? We can find out what is going on.*

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of a large purple circle at the top, connected by a dotted line to a smaller green circle. Below the green circle are three smaller circles: a red one, a blue one, and a yellow one, arranged vertically.

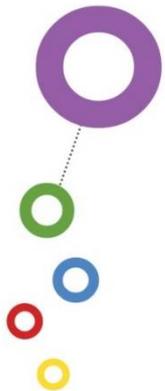
Ring man - Retell

Tall man - tell more, elaborate vocabulary

Pinky - predict

Open-ended questions



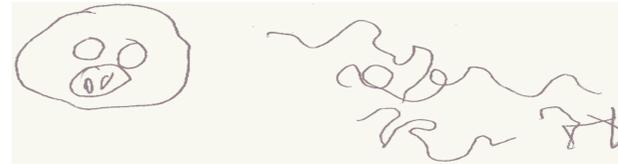


# When Do Children Become Writers?



# Stages of Emergent Writing

- Drawing as writing



- Scribble writing



- Letter-like forms



- Letter strings



- Invented spelling



Dawn  
United States

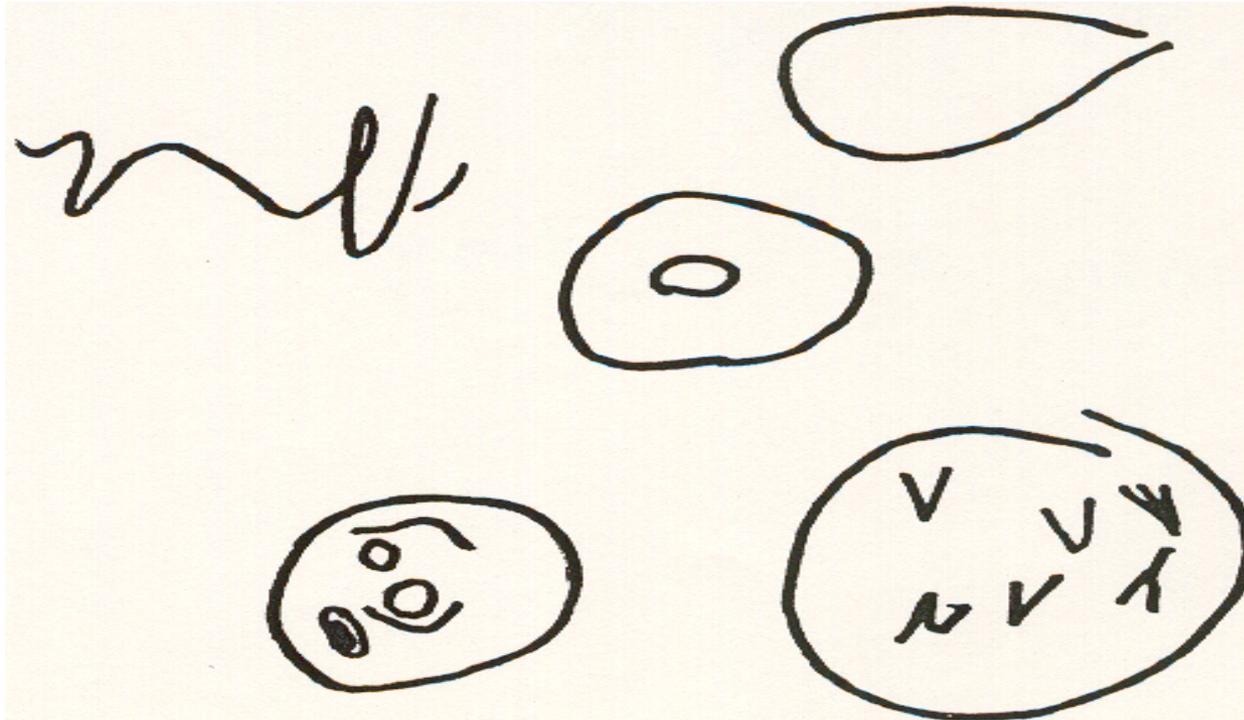
Najeeba  
Saudi Arabia

Della  
Egypt

From "Comprehension as Setting" by J. C. Harste and R. F. Carcy (*Monograph in Language and Reading Studies: New Perspectives on Comprehension*, November 3, 1979). Reproduced with permission.

Figure 1. Uninterrupted writing samples from three children age 4.





16144  
VIEWBOOK

“Play ball with Manuel.  
Sign up.”

PIBIUWAT Manuel  
SIN AHP

“Mom, why are you punishing Ted?”

MOM  
/ R YOU  
PN Sd A  
Ted

I LOST MY FIRST TOOTH

TOOK AT LUNCH & THANK.

LOOK FOR IT PLEZ.

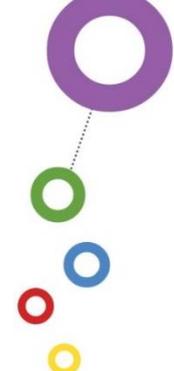


My Dog One day my dog  
barkt he barkt because I was  
Playing with him. he wants to  
aticken. We Play alot. We Love  
yech uther. THE End. 😊

# Supporting Writing Development

- Access to writing implements





# How Do Children Become Literate?

- Let's summarize.....
- Language
- Reading
- Writing

# What to tell people about Baby Signs and learning to talk

by Linda Acredolo, Ph.D. and Susan Goodwyn, Ph.D.

Author, BABY SIGNS: HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR BABY BEFORE YOUR BABY CAN TALK

By far the most frequently voiced concern about encouraging babies to use Baby Signs is that doing so will discourage them from learning to talk. In fact, we often refer to this belief as the “Mother-in-Law” myth because we so often hear it voiced in the following way:

*My mother-in-law says, “If he gets what he wants without using words, he’ll never learn to talk.” What should I tell her?*

Well, here is what we tell them:

1. Well-designed, government-funded research has shown that the opposite is true. Using a half-million dollar grant from the National Institutes of Health, we carefully compared Baby Signers to non-Baby Signers from the same communities on standardized tests of verbal language development. What did we find? In test after test the Baby Signers were more advanced than the non-Baby Signers in language skills. The results were published in 2000 in a “peer-reviewed” professional journal, and for those who would like to read it (or give it to their mother-in-law!), the full text is available on our Baby Signs web site ([www.babysignstoo.com](http://www.babysignstoo.com)).
2. Just as babies learn to crawl before they can walk, Baby Signs gives them a developmentally appropriate way to communicate before they can talk. Once children learn to walk they no longer crawl because of the greater freedom walking affords them. Communication is the same way. While Baby Signs are useful before children have words, speech allows them the ability to communicate more quickly and more fully. As a child’s mind and body develops, he or she will naturally transition to speaking in order to convey ever more complex ideas and longer sentences. Far from getting in the way of the process, Baby Signs provides a bridge that helps the transition from no language to spoken language.
3. The experience of Baby Signing teaches babies useful lessons about how language works--lessons that speed up the process of learning to talk once words are finally available. By enabling a baby to practice learning and using symbols to label objects, express needs, and describe feelings, Baby Signs creates the mental framework which makes it easy to incorporate words as soon as the baby’s vocal chords are developed enough to use them.
4. The natural reaction to a baby’s use of a Baby Sign is to “bathe” the child with words, and the more words a child hears, the faster he or she will learn to talk. Using Baby Signs results in children hearing lots of words and sentences directly relevant to the *topic they have chosen*. Why? Part of the reason is because we always encourage parents to say the word every time that they or their baby uses a Baby Sign. In addition, once a child begins to produce Baby Signs on his or her own, parents find themselves responding with words and words and *more* words. When your baby begins to look at you and sniff for flowers while strolling through the park, you will automatically respond with something like, “Oh, you see the flowers! Yes, those are pretty flowers. We see lots of *flowers*, don’t we?” This exposure to words they care about is exactly what children need to learn how to say the words themselves.
5. Every time a baby successfully uses a Baby Sign, changes occur in the brain, which bring the child closer to mastering language. The circuitry in the brain--upon which talking depends--develops along with a child’s experience with language. Because using Baby Signs enables

children to begin the process earlier, the development of this circuitry gets a significant “jump start” that continues to pay off for years down the line.

These are five very sound arguments. Sometimes, however, the most compelling information of all is the story of Linda's own son's journey to verbal language. Her son Kai, now 16, was a great Baby Signer. Starting with his first sign at 12 months (“fan”), he quickly built his signing vocabulary over the next months to a total of 40 Baby Signs by the time he was 19 months old. But, just as many of you may have experienced, words were not coming nearly as fast. In fact, the day he turned 19 months old, he had only 7 words! But then something “clicked” (probably neurologically) and in the space of just three weeks, *he added 67 new words!* Clearly, he knew very well what he wanted to say. The Baby Signs had enabled him to learn lots and lots about how language works, what objects are called, etc, and once the final underlying piece was in place, he was off to the races!

So, the next time someone suggests that your encouragement of Baby Signing is going to keep your child from talking, just smile and say “Oh, that old wife’s tale?” (We suggest you don’t mention Mothers-in-Laws yourself!) “No one who knows the research behind Baby Signs is worried about *that* anymore. Baby Signing is actually the best thing I could be doing to *help* my baby learn to talk.”

Good luck – and HAPPY BABY SIGNING!



## The Baby Signs® Program: A Movement Built on a Solid Foundation

Linda Acredolo, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus, UC Davis

Susan Goodwyn, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus, CSU Stanislaus

**Why Sign Language for Babies?** There's nothing more heart-wrenching than hearing a baby cry and not knowing why. The problem for babies is with the painstakingly slow development of the ability to produce words. Fortunately, babies are a good deal more adept at controlling the movement of other parts of their bodies. And now, thanks to our two decades of research at UC Davis, babies are enjoying the benefits of using simple signs to let us know what's on their minds.

**The Movement.** Although our research began in 1982, the public was first introduced to the Baby Signs® Program in 1996 via our book, *Baby Signs: How to Talk With Your Baby Before Your Baby Can Talk*. The book sparked a grassroots movement fueled by word of mouth as more and more families discovered for themselves how easy signing with babies is and how many benefits it yields. Now in its second edition, the book has sold over 500,000 copies, has been translated into 14 languages, and has launched a baby sign language movement that is sweeping the world. Below are some indications that the momentum is continuing to grow.

- **The Original Book.** Even 11 years after publication, our *Baby Signs* book continues to be a best-seller. For example, a check of Amazon.com on 3/31/07 found the book at #39 among all parenting books, and at #7 among parenting books focused on infants.
- **Signing in Child Care.** Signing with babies is growing in popularity among directors of child care programs. To service this trend, the Baby Signs® Program has developed an Early Childhood Educator Curriculum to help large and small child care providers incorporate signing into their classrooms. We are currently working with both Bright Horizons and Mini-Skools, two major child care corporations, to help them add the Baby Signs® Program to their curricula.
- **Department of Defense.** Recognizing the importance of signing to healthy development, the US Department of Defense contracted with Baby Signs® for help in implementing the Baby Signs® Program in every child care facility on every military base around the world—including all branches of the military (Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines).

**Research.** One reason that the Baby Signs® Program has been so well-received is because it is so firmly grounded in research. Below is a summary of the major research findings from our UC Davis research, as well as from research conducted by Dr. Claire Vallotton, a former UCD graduate student, now a Post-Doctoral student at Harvard University and winner of a young investigator award from the World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH).

### Results from our NIH-funded study (1989-1998)

- **Faster Verbal Development.** Babies who had been in the Baby Signs® Program developed both receptive and productive verbal skills faster than those who had not. (*Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 2000)
- **Higher IQs:** Retested at age 8, the children in our NIH-funded study who been in the Baby Signs® Program as babies scored significantly higher (by 12 points) on IQ tests than children who had not. (International Conference on Infant Studies, Paris, 2000)
- **Emotional Benefits.** A content analysis of parent interviews indicated that signing was associated with lower frustration, greater respect for babies' abilities, enriched parent-child relationships, increased interest in books, and enhanced infant self-esteem (Acredolo & Goodwyn, 1996).

- **Results from Early Head Start (EHS) Intervention Study**

EHS families who were encouraged to sign with their children were compared to EHS families who were not in an intervention study in the Yolo County (California) Early Head Start Program conducted by Dr. Vallotton. Results indicated that mothers in the signing families perceived their children as more “reinforcing” and “acceptable,” two important components of a Parenting Stress Index. Why these changes in attitude toward their children? Other results provide clues: Using signs changed the mother-child interactions specifically by (a) helping mothers become more “tuned in” to their children’s emotions, (b) increasing the children’s attempts to communicate with their mothers, and (c) decreasing the number of expressions of distress from the children. These results suggest that the addition of signing to EHS curricula for parents is an easy and effective way to improve family interactions in “at-risk” families. ((Paper presented at WAIMH Congress, 2006)

- **Results from UC Davis Child Care Studies**

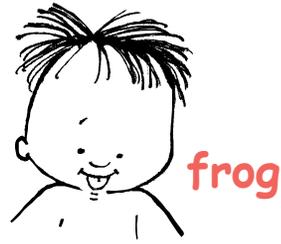
The Baby Signs<sup>®</sup> Program has been an integral part of the curriculum at the UCD Center for Child & Family Studies since 1990. Using this setting, Dr. Claire Vallotton conducted a study of 10 infants videotaped in interactions with teachers over an 8-month period and a study of 12 toddlers videotaped in interactions with teachers over a 3-month period. The videotapes were coded to provide data relevant to a variety of specific questions. The following were among the results:

- **Generally Observed Benefits:** Signing in the classroom reduces aggression, builds trust between babies and teachers, provides a “universal language” that facilitates interactions in multi-lingual classrooms, makes teachers more observant and responsive, increases “active” learning, helps daily routines proceed more smoothly. (Paper presented at the Zero to Three 18<sup>th</sup> National Training Institute, 2003)
- **Teacher Responsiveness:** Using multiple-regression analyses to account for teachers’ experience, children’s age, individual child effects, and frequency of children’s gestures, the data revealed that the children’s use of signs in response to teachers’ signs predicted more responsiveness from caregivers. (Paper presented at WAIMH Congress, 2006)
- **Internal States:** Infants and toddlers used signs to express both emotions (e.g., happy, sad, afraid, mad) and feelings (e.g., sleepy, cold, hurt)—both to label their own states and to comment on the states of other children. Such early evidence of empathy is exciting. (In press, *Infant Mental Health Journal*).
- **Conversations:** Two-sign combinations were observed as early as 9 months, 3-sign combinations at 12 months. Also, the children routinely used signs to engage in multi- utterance conversations with teachers, with the longest exchange including 16 turns (back and forth) in a conversation about a mom’s departure and eventual return. Paper presented at the International Society for Gesture Studies, June 2007.)

## **Conclusion**

Because the Baby Signs<sup>®</sup> Program is grounded in research, is so easy to implement, and has so many proven advantages for babies, families, and child care providers, we are confident that the current movement is going to keep on growing until it becomes as accepted and common place for future generations as teaching babies to wave “bye-bye” is today.

“Brown Bear”



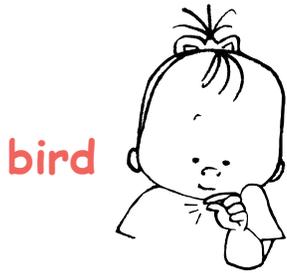
frog



bear



cat



bird



dog



duck



sheep

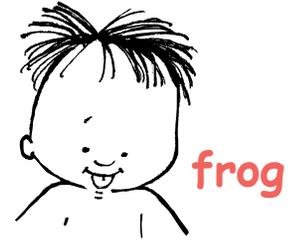


horse



fish

“Brown Bear”



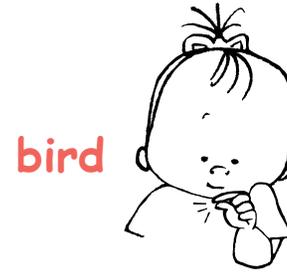
frog



bear



cat



bird



dog



duck



sheep



horse



fish

# The Baby Signs® Program

## Choosing Signs

- 1. Choose signs that match your child's interests.** Children are more likely to learn signs for things they like and want to communicate about.
- 2. Choose signs for objects, actions and describing words.** Babies love to sign about objects (nouns) like their toys, animals and food. They also enjoy signs about things they love to do (verbs), like PLAY, EAT and LOVE. In addition, they appreciate being able to use describing words, like HOT, COLD, BIG and LITTLE.
- 3. Choose signs for words your baby can't say yet.** Remember, a main goal of teaching signs is to help children communicate when they don't have a way to express themselves with words. Even children who can already say quite a few words will appreciate signs for words that might still be too hard for them—like "kangaroo" or "toothbrush."
- 4. Choose signs for words your child doesn't say clearly.** Sometimes babies use the same sound pattern to mean many things, like "ba" for bottle, ball, blanket, bath, and so on. If your child has a sign to use along with the word, his message will be much clearer!
- 5. Choose signs that can help in dangerous situations.** HOT, HURT or HELP can be valuable signs for babies in distressing situations. In fact, we often refer to such signs as "safety" signs. Conceivably, a barefoot baby who steps on hot pavement could use all three!
- 6. Choose signs that can prevent frustration.** Using signs like MORE, ALL DONE and SLEEP can help give babies a stronger sense of control during mealtime and bedtime routines. This sense of control helps reduce frustration for babies and parents.
- 7. Choose signs for frequently-used words.** The more often you use a sign, the easier it will be for your baby to learn it. Choosing signs from daily routines like mealtime, bedtime, bath time, and your family routines (going to the park, car rides, trips to school) is a great way to help you and your baby have many chances for signing adventures!

*Remember, no matter which signs you choose to introduce, be on the lookout for signs your baby may invent all by himself!*



# brown

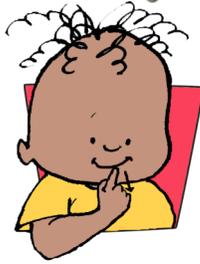
marrón



Slide "b" hand down cheek.

# red

rojo



Place index finger on lips stroke down one time.

# yellow

amarillo



Twist "Y" hand in front of body.

# blue

azul



Gently shake "b" hand.

# green

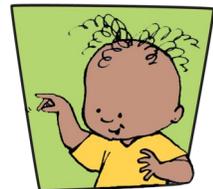
verde



Hold up "G" hand up and twist back and forth.

# purple

morado



Gently shake "p" hand.

# white

blanco



Place hand on chest, pull hand away from body closing fingertips.

# black

negro



Move pointer finger across forehead.

# gold

oro



Point to ear lobe then turn hand away from body as hand changes to "Y" hand shape.

# Read All About It: Linking the Baby Signs<sup>®</sup> Program and Literacy Development

Linda Acredolo, Ph.D. and Susan Goodwyn, Ph.D.  
Co-founders, Baby Signs, Inc.



The buzz word is literacy.... All around us we hear about the importance of literacy. Parents are told to read, read, read to their children—whether it’s cloth books, board books, or chapter books. With all this emphasis on literacy, it seems particularly important to review the connection with the Baby Signs<sup>®</sup> Program.

Although the phrase “learn to read” seems pretty straightforward, the truth is that learning to read requires the development of a whole host of subsidiary skills. For example, the “No Child Left Behind Act” of 2001 defines reading as “a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:

- the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print
- the ability to decode unfamiliar words
- the ability to read fluently
- sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension
- the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print
- the development and maintenance of a motivation to read



Along with appreciation of these and other sub-skills has come recognition that many of them, given a supportive environment, can begin developing well before the school years. And what makes an environment “supportive?” In addition to the obvious importance of parents reading to their children, it turns out that adding signing to the mix makes a significant contribution by helping jumpstart development in a number of critical reading-relevant domains. Some examples:

- **Verbal language skills:** Research shows that children who are strong in verbal language skills have an easier time learning to read. Reasons for this relationship include the following: Knowing lots of words helps children comprehend what is read, guess at words that are difficult to decode, explain problems they are having, and understand explanations and instructions teachers provide.

And how does the Baby Signs<sup>®</sup> program help? Our NIH-supported research showed that infants exposed to signs during infancy had better receptive and expressive

language vocabularies by the time they were two and three years old. In fact, the infants who learned to use signs as infants had verbal IQ scores that remained high well into the elementary school years.

- **Phonemic Awareness:** This term refers to recognition of the fact that words are comprised of separate sounds (or phonemes) -- that “cat,” for example, is made of “c” + “ah” + “t.” Because individual letters stand for individual sounds, it’s easy to see why knowing that words are composed of separate sounds is important to learning to read. And one of the best ways to help children develop this awareness is through the use of rhymes. When a child becomes familiar with a rhyme (e.g., Jack and *Jill* when up the *hill*), he or she learns that words can differ in how they begin but be the same in how they end. This realization, by definition, involves recognizing that words are made up of individual sounds. Voila! Phonemic awareness.

And how does the Baby Signs® Program help develop phonemic awareness? One of the most popular ways that parents teach signs is through rhymes and songs, like “Twinkle Twinkle,” “Itsy, Bitsy Spider,” and the many songs and rhymes created specifically for the Baby Signs® Program. These rhymes and the rhythm that we expose children to while we are singing and signing help children develop this crucial emergent literacy skill.

- **Familiarity with print and enjoyment of books:** Ask any Baby Signs® family and you are likely to hear that their children love books. The reason is because the ability to use signs enables babies to take an active role in book-reading. Instead of simply listening passively as their parents name things on the page, signers can provide the names themselves long before they would be able to do so with words. And the praise they receive in return makes them eager to keep exploring new books. In fact, parents even report that their toddlers sit down and read their books by signing to themselves!



So, the next time someone asks you how the Baby Signs® Program is related to literacy development, you will have good information to share. And, if you’re interested in learning more about early literacy, here are some good sources of additional information:

<http://www.familit.org/Resources/ReadingTips/Parentsguide/Index.cfm>

[http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/facts/facts\\_overview.html](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/facts/facts_overview.html)

<http://www.getreadytoread.org/early.html>

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/index.html>

© 2008 The Baby Signs Partnership.

[www.BabySignstoo.com](http://www.BabySignstoo.com)

Revised 06/2014



## Helping Toddlers at a “Loss for Words”: The Baby Signs® Program and Social Development

Linda Acredolo, Ph.D. and Susan Goodwyn, Ph.D.  
Co-founders, Baby Signs® Program

Every parent wants his or her child to enjoy other people and to be well-liked. In Developmental Psychology, we include both these goals under the term “social development.” Although most parents are aware that innate differences in temperament contribute importantly to individual differences in social development, other significant factors are less obvious. One often-overlooked factor is language development. It turns out that, just as is true for adults, children who feel “tongue-tied” (in their case due to poorer verbal skills) in social situations tend to avoid them altogether rather than stand awkwardly in silence. Here’s how we know. In study after study, Dr. Mary Ann Evans from the University of Guelph in Canada has found that children as young as 36 months who are shy, also tend to be less facile with language than their more out-going peers. Because their language skills are no match for their more verbal playmates—or for the unfamiliar adults who try engaging them in conversation at the grocery store—they quickly learn to withdraw completely or to rely on their parents rather than risk being judged as inadequate or dumb.



What’s a parent to do? Of course, we here at the Baby Signs® Program have some excellent advice – at least for how to help prevent the problem in the first place. By encouraging their babies to use signs, parents can help them get a jumpstart on learning to talk, thereby increasing the chance that they will be comfortable talking with their peers as they move into the toddler and preschool years.

Another plus when it comes to peer interaction is the effect of signing on aggression. Because the ability to use signs enables children to get their needs met through calm communication, they are less likely to feel the frustration that so often fuels biting and hitting during the toddler period. In fact, being able to sign also benefits potential victims



of attacks by enabling them to sign an emphatic “Stop!” or a reminder to be “Gentle!” If all else fails, they at least have a way to explicitly ask for “help” from an adult and indicate where they “hurt.”

Finally, the sense of being effective in the world that signing allows increases the chance that children will develop self-confidence and self-esteem – two vital ingredients in the recipe for social success.



For all these reasons, the Baby Signs® encouraging babies to sign via the Baby Signs® Program is a great first step toward helping them be comfortable in their social worlds and avoid the feelings of self-consciousness, fear, and loneliness that all too frequently plague the “shy” child.

Visit [www.babysignstoo.com](http://www.babysignstoo.com) for more information about Baby Signs® resources to help you and your baby enjoy all the benefits that signing can bring.



© 2008 Baby Signs® Partnership

[www.babysignstoo.com](http://www.babysignstoo.com)

# The Baby Signs® Program

## Proven Benefits

In the course of two decades of research, Drs. Acredolo and Goodwyn have uncovered a variety of ways in which babies and their caregivers benefit from using the Baby Signs® Program. What they found is that the Baby Signs® Program:

- Reduces frustration and builds trust
- Allows babies to share their worlds
- Strengthens the parent-infant bond
- Reveals how smart babies really are
- Promotes positive emotional development
- Boosts babies' self-confidence
- Helps babies learn to talk
- Jumpstarts intellectual development



# The Baby Signs® Program

## Ready, Set, Sign!

It's fine to start modeling signs the day your baby is born. However, many parents prefer to start signing closer to the time their baby is ready to sign back. How do you know if your baby has reached that point? Answer the questions below, and if you find that two or more items apply to you, your baby may be ready to start signing. But remember, the more babies see their parents using the signs, the faster they will learn them. Repetition is the key to learning!

- Is your baby beginning to point to things?
- Is your baby bringing toys or objects to you and looking for a response?
- Is your baby beginning to wave "bye-bye"?
- Is your baby beginning to shake his/her head for "no" or "yes"?
- Is your baby beginning to take an interest in picture books?
- Even though your baby knows some words, are there still important things your baby would like to talk about but can't?



# The Baby Signs® Program

## Scientific Research

Dr. Linda Acredolo and Dr. Susan Goodwyn, authors of the book *Baby Signs: How to Talk with Your Baby Before Your Baby Can Talk*, have conducted over two decades of academic research on the use of sign language with hearing babies, including a long-term study funded by the National Institutes of Health. Here are the highlights from that study.

### Participants

More than 140 families joined the study beginning when their babies were 11 months old. Each family was randomly assigned to a signing or a non-signing group. The groups were equivalent at the beginning of the study in terms of the following characteristics: sex and birth order of the children, their tendency to vocalize or verbalize words, and the parents' education and income levels.

### Assessment

The children were assessed using standardized language measures at 11, 15, 19, 24, 30, and 36 months old. In addition, as many children as could be relocated at age 8 were assessed using the WISC-III IQ test, the most commonly used measure of children's intelligence.

### Results

Twenty-four-month-old signing babies were on average talking more like 27- or 28-month-olds, representing more than a three-month advantage over the non-signers. In addition, the babies who signed were putting together significantly longer sentences. Thirty-six-month-old signers on average were talking like 47-month-olds, putting them almost a full year ahead of their average age-mates. Eight-year-olds who had signed as babies scored an average of 12 points higher in IQ on the WISC-III (Mean = 114, 75<sup>th</sup> percentile) than their non-signing peers (Mean = 102, 53<sup>rd</sup> percentile).

### Conclusion

The Baby Signs® Program helps children develop both language *and* cognitive skills.



# Keeping the Bough from Breaking: Signing and Attachment

By Linda Acredolo, Ph.D  
The Baby Signs Partnership

What do you think is the optimal age for a child to be adopted? If you're like most people, your answer is "at birth." It just seems like common sense to us today.

Unfortunately, however, for centuries of adopted children that was *not* the typical answer. Even as late as the 1930s and 40s, well-known developmental psychologists argued that adoption at age 2 made the most sense—in order to ensure that the adoptive parents knew what they were getting! What no one knew then, but we know *now*, is that by waiting until age 2, adopting families were quite likely to be getting a child whose future emotional development had been put at risk. As hard as it is to believe today, no one thought it mattered what happened to a child during the first two years as long as his or her physical needs were taken care of.

Recent research has drastically changed this early view of infancy. We now know that a secure emotional bond with loving parents during infancy lays the foundation for future emotional development, including whether children view themselves as loveable, trust other people, and are capable of feeling empathy. Research has also provided clues as to what factors determine whether a child will develop a "secure" vs. "insecure" attachment with a parent. Specifically, we now know that the most important ingredients are sensitivity and responsiveness on the part of the parent—in other words, the ability to *read* the baby well (know what he or she needs) and the willingness to meet those needs in a timely fashion.

The bottom line of the attachment relationship, in other words, is very sensible: Children fall in love with those who meet their physical needs for food and warmth, comfort them when they are hurt, protect them when they are frightened, and, in general, make them feel respected, understood, and loved.

And here, obviously, is where the Baby Signs® Program enters the picture.

- Because signs make the task of "reading" the preverbal baby so much easier, they help parents provide the baby what he or she needs to feel secure.
- Second, parents who are intently watching for signs are automatically paying closer attention to whatever the baby does, thus increasing the chance that even non-sign signals will be detected.
- Third, because they reveal to parents how much smarter their baby is than he or she looks (after all, babies *do* drool a lot!), signs convince parents that there's truly "somebody *home* in there," somebody who is capable of feeling loved and secure or anxious and rejected. That leads to the understanding that it really *matters* what a parent does.
- Finally, signs enable babies to share their worlds with their parents, thereby increasing the joy that each takes in the other's company.

For all these reasons, signing increases the probability of a secure attachment. That's the formal way of saying (as we often do!) that the Baby Signs® Program helps forge bonds of love and affection that can last a lifetime.

# The Baby Signs® Program

## Signing at Home

### Baby Signs® Board Books

**Mealtime:** *eat, drink, milk, more, cereal, banana, apple*

**Bedtime:** *bath, toothbrush, stars, blanket quiet, light, sleep*

**Animals:** *cat, bird, butterfly, bunny, duck horse, fish*

**Favorites:** *hat, dog, baby, book, all done, love, telephone*

### Baby Signs® DVDs

**My Mealtime Signs**  
*eat, drink, more, milk, bib, cereal, all done*

**My Bedtime Signs**  
*sleep, light, book, love, stars, moon*

**My Bath Time Signs**  
*bath, bubbles, duck, frog, toothbrush, water*

### Other Books that Feature the Starter Signs

**I Love You, Mommy!** (A Little Golden Book)  
*mommy, cat, dog, ball, hat, eat, hot, more*

**Out and About** (A DK "Baby's World" Book)  
*mommy, daddy, eat, more, hat, ball, hot, hurt*

**I Love You When....**(John Edward Hasse)  
*mommy, cat, dog, hat, hurt, eat, ball*

**Biscuit's New Trick** (Alyssa Satin Capucille)  
*dog, cat, ball* (lots of repetition of the words makes this book a good choice)

**Kitten For A Day** (By Ezra Jack Keats)  
*cat, dog, eat* (lots of repetition of the words makes this book a good choice)



### Other Good Signing Books

**Goodnight Moon** (Margaret Wise Brown)  
*rabbit, mouse, moon, stars, sleep, hush, mittens, kittens, eat, brush*

**What Shall We Do with the Boo Hoo Baby?** (Cressida Cowell)  
*cat, dog, cow, duck, baby, sad, eat, bath, play, sleep, happy*

**Tom and Pippo on the Beach** (Helen Oxenbury)  
*daddy, monkey, car, sun, hot, hat, water*

**Pat the Pony** (Edith Kunhardt)  
*pony (horse), shoe, flower, duck, cow, milk, hat, sheep, pig, dog, drink, bye-bye*

**The Wee Little Woman** (Byron Barton)  
*little, woman, house, cat, cow, milk, star, moon, sad, happy*

**Brown Bear, Brown Bear** (Bill Martin, Jr.)  
*bear, bird, duck, horse, frog, cat, dog, sheep, fish, children*



Wonderful



Marvelous



Beautiful



Magical



Filled



Curiosity

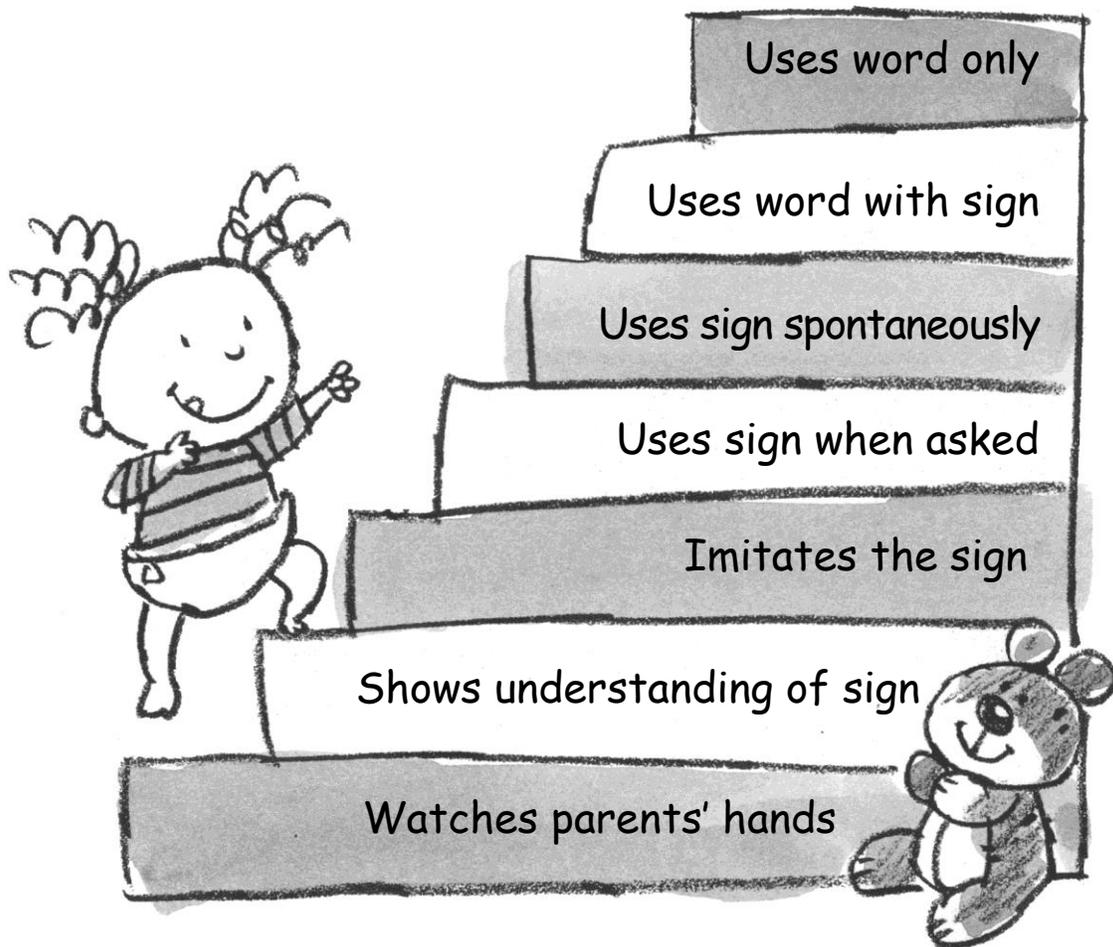


Dreams

**I Think You're  
Wonderful!**

The Baby Signs® Program  
"Signs" of Progress

Steps your baby will take  
in the journey from the sign to word:



The Baby Signs® Program  
Suggested Starter Signs



Eat



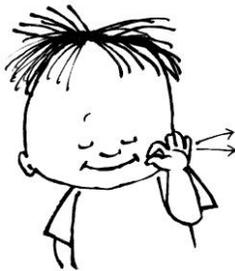
Drink



More



All Done



Cat



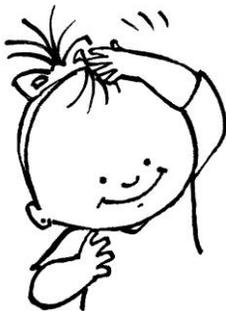
Turtle



Dog



Bunny



Hat



Ball



Hot



Hurt



Mommy



Daddy



Please



Thank You



# The Baby Signs® Program

## Ten Steps to Success

### 1. Start with just a few

Choosing a few means you are more likely to remember them.

### 2. Always use the sign and the word together

Seeing the sign and hearing the word together helps your baby make the connection.

### 3. Repeat the sign and the word

Be sure your baby is watching, then quickly repeat the sign and word combination several times.

### 4. Point when possible

If the sign you're using stands for an object, point to the object while saying the word and making the sign.

### 5. Guide your baby's hands

If you feel it is necessary, gently guide your child's hands, but don't expect perfection. Your baby's motor skills are limited.

### 6. Make signing a part of your daily activities

Add reminders of the signs you are teaching to your daily routines. (e.g., a rubber duck in the bathtub or flower stickers on your baby's high chair.)

### 7. Watch for opportunities

Be on the lookout for things to talk about with signs. More examples mean faster learning.

### 8. Be flexible

Feel free to change a sign or make up a new one. And be sure to watch for your baby's own creations.

### 9. Be patient

The younger your baby, the longer it will take to learn a sign.

### 10. Make signing fun

Praise and encourage your baby often. Have fun together and enjoy the magic that using the Baby Signs® Program will bring.

# Baby Signs® Songs

## If You're Hungry and You Know It

Tune: *If You're Happy and You Know It*

If you're hungry and you know it, go like this (EAT, EAT).  
If you're hungry and you know it, go like this (EAT, EAT).  
If you're hungry and you know it, and you really want to show it,  
If you're hungry and you know it, go like this (EAT, EAT).

### **First lines for additional verses (follow same pattern as above)**

If you're thirsty and you know it, go like this (DRINK, DRINK).  
If you want more and you know it, go like this (MORE, MORE).  
If you're hot and you know it, go like this (HOT, HOT).  
If you're hurt and you know it, go like this (HURT, HURT).  
If you're thankful and you know it, go like this (THANK YOU).

## The Please Song

Tune: *London Bridge*

PLEASE give me a HAT to wear, HAT to wear, HAT to wear,  
PLEASE give me a HAT to wear; THANK YOU, MOMMY!

PLEASE give me a BALL to roll, BALL to roll, BALL to roll,  
PLEASE give me a BALL to roll; THANK YOU, DADDY!

PLEASE give me a CAT to pet, CAT to pet, CAT to pet,  
PLEASE give me a CAT to pet; THANK YOU, MOMMY!

PLEASE give me a DOG to love, DOG to love, DOG to love,  
PLEASE give me a DOG to love; THANK YOU, DADDY!



# Baby Signs® Songs

## The Mealtime Song

Tune: *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*

EAT, EAT, EAT some food  
EAT some food I say  
Higgledy-Piggledy, Bobbledy-Boop  
It's fun to Sign and Play!

DRINK, DRINK, DRINK your juice  
DRINK your juice I say  
Higgledy-Piggledy, Bobbledy-Boop  
It's fun to Sign and Play!

MORE, MORE, ask for MORE  
Ask for MORE I say  
Higgledy-Piggledy, Bobbledy-Boop  
It's fun to Sign and Play!

DONE, DONE, I'm ALL DONE  
I'm ALL DONE I say  
Higgledy-Piggledy, Bobbledy-Boop  
It's fun to Sign and Play!



## My Friend BeeBo

Tune: *Old McDonald*

My friend BeeBo has some pets  
Ee I ee I o  
And one of his pets it is a DOG  
Ee I ee I o  
With a (pant pant) here  
And a (pant pant) there  
Here a (pant)  
There a (pant)  
Everywhere a (pant pant)  
My friend BeeBo has some pets  
Ee I ee I o

And one of his pets it is a CAT  
Ee I ee I o  
With a kitty-CAT here  
And a kitty-CAT there  
Here a CAT

And one of his pets it is a BUNNY  
Ee I ee I o  
With a BUNNY rabbit here  
And a BUNNY rabbit there  
Here a BUNNY  
There a BUNNY  
Everywhere a BUNNY rabbit  
My friend BeeBo has some pets  
Ee I ee I o

And one of his pets it is a TURTLE  
Ee I ee I o  
With a little TURTLE here  
And a little TURTLE there  
Here a TURTLE  
There a TURTLE  
Everywhere a little TURTLE

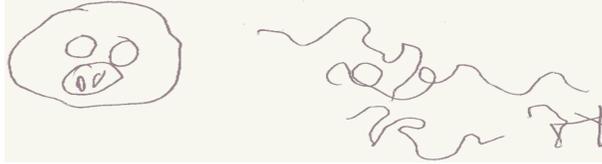
There a CAT  
Everywhere a kitty-CAT  
My friend BeeBo has some pets  
Ee I ee I o

My friend BeeBo has some pets  
Ee I ee I o

## Learning to Write

Researcher Elizabeth Sulzby observed very young children's writing efforts and has found there are seven broad categories of early writing. Sulzby believes that these categories do not form a strict developmental hierarchy. While there is a general movement from less mature forms towards conventional forms, children move back and forth across these forms when composing texts, and they often combine several different types in the same composition.

**Drawing as writing** – Pictures represent writing. Tiffany at 2 ½



**Scribble writing** – Continuous lines represent writing. Tiffany at 3



**Letter-like units** – The child makes a series of separate marks that have some letter-like qualities. Tiffany at 3 ½



**Non-phonetic letter strings** – The child writes strings of letters that show no evidence of letter-sound relationships. These can be random groups of letters or repeated clusters of letters. Tiffany at 4 – “It says I love Ruffy (her puppy)”.

SI S S TI S DE M WH FT T T I S S S S + + D

**Copying from environmental print** – Child copies print found in their home. This often includes their name. Tiffany's (4 ½) name copied from a special sign.

A P P L E S U  
F C E

**Invented spelling** - The child creates his own spelling using letter-sounds relationships. Tiffany at 5 “No Picture in Books”.

no pickrs in books

# Frequently asked questions about writing

## When does my child really start to write?

Children begin to read and write informally long before they enter school. By the time children are able to pick up a pencil or crayon and draw or scribble, they are demonstrating their knowledge that these marks mean something, and the first step toward written communication has begun.

## When my child draws or scribbles, does that mean that I should begin to teach him how to hold the pencil and form letters correctly?

When your child first began to sing songs, did you start teaching him to play the piano? No, of course not! But you did enjoy the songs he or she sang and you sang along. This is exactly the approach parents should take when their child first begins to draw or scribble-write. Say, "Tell me about what you wrote about." Listen to the answer and compliment the effort.

## How can I encourage my child's writing?

When children watch adults write a grocery list, or a letter, or pay bills, they are often motivated to imitate this writing. Usually all children need are the writing materials -- paper, markers, crayons, pencils -- and they will take the ideas from there. Occasionally, you could suggest that they might wish to write a letter to Grandma or leave a note for the tooth fairy. Another perfect opportunity to encourage writing is during their dramatic play. When children play house, they can write grocery lists or leave phone messages-- all you need to do is provide the writing materials and praise. Children will write frequently if they feel their attempts to communicate are accepted and valued as meaningful.

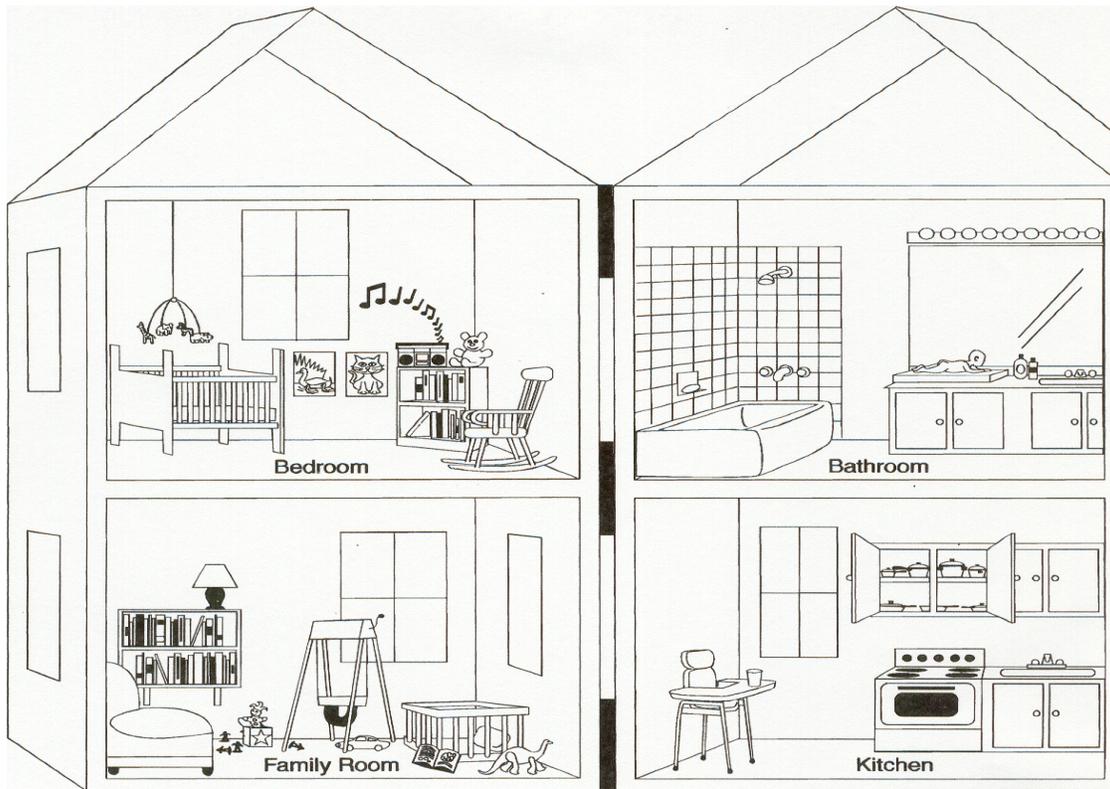
## Isn't handwriting practice important for learning to read and write?

Learning the correct written form of a letter is called handwriting. It is an opportunity for children to gain control of the small muscles in their fingers and hands. However, handwriting drills do not teach children how to read and write. A child who exhibits excellent penmanship will not necessarily learn to read or communicate in written form any faster than the child whose writing still resembles scribbles. A note of caution: Critical comments about a child's handwriting efforts can stifle the joy of communicating. When a new scribe begins to learn the "how" of writing, it is far better to praise the efforts. This will encourage the child to write more.

## How do I read my child's written work?

Start by asking your child to tell you what was written. The information provided will give you context. These clues should enable you to figure out what the scribble, or shapes, or letters represent. Children tend to progress through predictable developmental stages on the way toward conventional spelling. This progression may proceed from scribbles to letter strings, to single letters representing whole words or thoughts, to invented spelling to conventional spelling. Invented spelling is using two or three letters to phonetically represent a word -- this is sometimes called developmental spelling.

H        ----    hpe        ----    hapy        ----    happy



<p><b>Bedroom Talk</b></p>	<p><b>Bathroom Talk</b></p>
<p>Label and describe toys, talk about their colors, textures, and special features, like the sounds and motions, Tickle Me Elmo makes.</p> <p>Label and describe clothes, talk about the color, style, and textures. For instance, Today we are wearing a warm, wooly sweater because it is cool outside.</p>	<p>Label and describe the activities of bath time, for instance the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• slippery soap,</li> <li>• warm water,</li> <li>• bubbles in the water,</li> <li>• tickles of washing your toes</li> </ul> <p>With water toys talk about the pouring water, the swimming diver, the floating duck.</p>
<p><b>Family room Talk</b></p>	<p><b>Kitchen Talk</b></p>
<p>Talk about the toys, read storybooks, watch children's videos and discuss the characters, watch children's television and discuss the actions of characters.</p> <p>Ask child to pick up toys by describing them. For instance, Jose, please pick up the toy that has four blue wheels.</p>	<p>Talk about the food you are preparing for meals, the color, texture, smell and taste. Talk about how small you cutting the pieces, how you are cooking the food.</p> <p>Describe how to set the table, demonstrate the please and thank you of sharing food at the table.</p>

## Parental Support and Best Books by Age

Age	Use books that:	Book Examples:	Adult Support:
0 – 6 months	<p>Are made of sturdy cardboard or cloth or soft plastic as first books that will withstand a great deal of love and chewing.</p> <p>Feature simple pictures so babies may focus their eyes on the object and examine the illustration closely.</p> <p>Have high contrasting colors such as black/white or red/yellow because babies' vision is not fully developed and responds best to bold contrasting colors.</p>	<p><i>White on Black</i>. Hoban, T. (1993). New York: Greenwillow Books.</p> <p><i>Fuzzy Bee and Friends</i> Priddy, R. (2003). New York: Macmillian/Priddy Books.</p> <p><i>Hello Baby: Faces</i>. Priddy, R. (2013). New York: Macmillian/Priddy Books.</p>	<p>Hold books between 10-12 inches from baby's face as initially baby's vision and focus is best at this distance. By 4 months baby's vision is nearly adult acuity.</p> <p>Babies are hard-wired to focus on faces and will study real faces and pictures and drawings of faces.</p> <p>Point to and label objects using parentese, the exaggerated, drawn-out form of speech that people use to communicate with babies, The use of parentese plays a vital role in helping infants to analyze and absorb the phonetic elements of their parents' language.</p> <p>Read and re-read books for 5 to 10 minutes, at least daily.</p>
6 - 12 months	<p>Have simple illustrations and bold colors to stimulate baby's vision and focus baby's interest.</p> <p>Encourage babies to reach out and touch the pages and enjoy reading as a tactile experience. Texture also allows babies to build on their sensory, exploratory approach to objects around them.</p>	<p><i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear</i>. Carle, E. (1992). New York: Henry Holt &amp; Company LLC.</p> <p><i>Touch and Feel: Baby Animals</i>. Kindersley, D. (1999). New York: Dorling Kindersley Publishing.</p> <p><i>Pat the Bunny</i>, Kunhardt, D. (1940). New York: Golden Books.</p>	<p>Point to and label objects. After several readings begin to ask baby to point to familiar objects, for example, <i>Can you point to the ladybug?</i> This activity, called rehearsal, strengthens short-term memory.</p> <p>Use descriptive language to describe the textures they are feeling, for example, <i>The blue blanket is so soft and fuzzy</i>. Joint attention between child and adult helps to develop the child's vocabulary.</p> <p>Read and re-read books for 5 to 15 minutes (depending on child's engaged attention span), at least daily.</p>
12 – 24Months	<p>Develop children's understanding of story, a beginning, middle, and end with interesting characters that are trying to solve a problem that young children can relate to. Story/narrative books have illustrations that help tell the story.</p> <p>Provide children with a deeper understanding about the world. Expository (fact or non-fiction) texts for young children often describe plants, animals, cars/trucks/trains/planes/ships and may use detailed realistic photos or illustrations.</p> <p>Have opportunities to directly interact with the pages, for example sturdy lift the flap books and texture books.</p>	<p><i>Froggy Gets Dressed</i>. London, J. (1992). New York: Scholastic.</p> <p><i>Bathtime</i> Boynton, S. (2007). New York: Workman Pub. Co.</p> <p><i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i>, Carlile, E. (1969). New York: Penguin Books.</p> <p><i>The Wheels on the Bus</i>. Stanley, M. (2002). Bristol, PA: Baby's First Book Club.</p> <p><i>Toes, Ears, &amp; Nose!</i> Bauer, M. D. (2003). New York: Little Simon.</p>	<p>Children begin to experience a language explosion at this time as short- and long-term memory begins to develop, therefore parents can begin to ask a child to name the familiar objects on the page, for example, (point to an object) <i>What is this?</i></p> <p>Encourage child to hold the book and turn pages as this allows the child to be in charge of the book during story time which facilitates interest and attention span.</p> <p>Read and re-read books for 10 to 15 minutes (depending on child's engaged attention span), at least daily or as often as the child is interested.</p> <p>Remember children love their books and want to read them over and over again.</p>

Age	Use books that:	Book Examples	Adult Support
24 – 36 months	<p>Encourage children to label/discuss emotions. Have story plots that reflect real-life events that children often experience, e.g. sibling rivalry, getting into trouble, being fearful.</p> <p>Offers opportunities to learn about colors and shapes.</p> <p>Provide occasions to count and begin to learn to recognize numbers</p>	<p><i>Julius, the Baby of the World.</i> Henkes, K. (1990). New York: Harper-Collins</p> <p><i>Where The Wild Things Are.</i> Sendak, M. (1988). New York: HarperTrophy.</p> <p><i>No David!</i> Shannon, D. (1998). New York: Scholastic Trade.</p> <p><i>There's a Nightmare in My Closet.</i> Mayer, M. (1968). New York: Dial Books.</p> <p><i>The Artist Who Painted the Blue Horse,</i> Carlile, E. (2011). New York: Penguin Books.</p> <p><i>Little Blue and Little Yellow.</i> Lionni, L. (1959) New York: Random House.</p> <p><i>Ten Little Ladybugs.</i> Gerth, M. (2000). Franklin, TN: Dalmatian Press.</p>	<p>Comprehension, at its most basic, relies on a child's interest, attention and memory. To help stimulate all three, parents need to engage children with interactive questions before, during and after reading. Think FIVE-A</p> <p><b>Fact questions</b> ask the child to locate, remember and/or recognize key facts about the story that can be found in the text. Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What is the name of this character?</i></li> <li>• <i>What happened first in the story?</i></li> <li>• <i>Where do penguins lay their eggs?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Inferential and Interpretative questions</b> ask the child to draw on prior knowledge and experience and the hints in the text to make sense of the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Why do you think he ____?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you think will happen next? Why?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you think that character felt? Why?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Vocabulary questions</b> ask the child to explain the meaning of a word or offer another word with similar meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do you think this word means?</i></li> <li>• <i>This word means the same as .....</i></li> </ul>
36 – 60 months	<p>Teach information and basic skills. For example, children are learning about important symbols called the alphabet! Books that teach the alphabet in joyful rhymes are a favorite.</p> <p>Offer time to sing and move, including finger plays.</p> <p>Continue to teach about science, nature, math.</p> <p>Talk about feelings and behavior. These stories also encourage dramatic play, which allow children to practice emotional responses.</p>	<p><i>Eating the Alphabet Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z.</i> Ehlert, L. (2007). New York: Houghlin, Mifflin, Hartcourt.</p> <p><i>The Itsy Bitsy Spider.</i> Trapani, I. (1993). Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing.</p> <p><i>Mister Seahorse,</i> Carlile, E. (2004). New York: Penguin Books.</p> <p><i>Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse.</i> Henkes, K. (1996). New York: Harper-Collins.</p>	<p><b>Evaluation questions</b> allow children to offer their own opinion, to make judgments, compare and contrast, and develop reasoning skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What is your favorite wild thing? Why?</i></li> <li>• <i>If you could change one thing in the story, what would it be? Why?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Application questions</b> ask the child to connect the story to their own experiences. Application questions help children to transfer knowledge learned in one context to another.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What other book talks about this?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is there another character who acted this way?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have you ever had an experience like this? Tell me about it!</i></li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Remember reading time should be fun and relaxed. These happy moments with a child will be remembered with love and joy and sets the stage for later learning!</b></p>			<p>Read and re-read books for 5 to 20 minutes (depending on child's engaged attention span), at least daily or as often as the child is interested.</p> 

## Typical Language Development and Strategies for Supporting Children's Language Development

age	Typical Child Behavior	Strategies for Supporting Language	
0 to 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of communication consists of crying, as larynx has not yet descended</li> <li>Turns head to the direction of the family's voices</li> <li>Is startled by loud or surprising sounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use "parentese" intentionally to stimulate and extend infant's attention span.</li> <li>Describe actions and objects that are encountered in the daily routine (while dressing, changing, feeding, ect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk frequently at close proximity to the infant's face. At about three to four months the child will begin to babble back. Engage in these two-way conversations!</li> </ul>
3 to 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begins to make cooing sounds to solicit attention from caregiver</li> <li>Makes "raspberry" sounds</li> <li>Begins to play with voice</li> <li>Observes caregiver's face when being spoken to; often shapes mouth in a similar manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read to infant selecting books with brightly colored, simple illustrations</li> <li>Introduce songs and music at different times throughout the day and sing simple songs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modulate voice and vary intonation to match levels of enthusiasm, emotion, meaning.</li> <li>Use a second language naturalistically if parent is bilingual.</li> </ul>
6 to 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocalization with intonation</li> <li>Responds to his or her name</li> <li>Responds appropriately to friendly and angry tones</li> <li>Begins to say and repeat word-like sounds called echolalia.</li> <li>Exhibits vocables, conversation-like tones and behaviors, such as turn-taking, eye contact, and recognizable gestures.</li> <li>Uses holophrastic words, where one word carried the semantic burden for a whole sentence or phrase.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use words to describe your feeling(s). <i>Mom is so happy!</i></li> <li>Talk face-to-face at a distance where child can clearly see the adult's mouth and facial expressions as he or she speaks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a second language naturalistically if parent is bilingual.</li> <li>Continue to sing songs and engage in finger plays</li> </ul>
12 to 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands simple instructions, especially if vocal or physical cues are given</li> <li>Is aware of the social value of speech</li> <li>Has the ability to relate new words to preexisting internalized concepts, then remember and use them after only one exposure (fast mapping).</li> <li>Uses two- and three-word sentences that contain only the most necessary of words to convey meaning (telegraphic speech)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold child and read plastic, board, or cloth books on a daily basis to share new words and/or to repeat reading familiar books that the child enjoys.</li> <li>Continue to talk frequently all day long, describing actions and objects that are encountered in daily routines</li> </ul>
18 to 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary will grow from 5–300 words, initially nouns</li> <li>Is able to follow simple commands</li> <li>Is able to use at least two prepositions, such as <i>in, on, under</i></li> <li>Creates short sentence—largely noun-verb combinations</li> <li>Approximately 2/3 of what child says should be understandable</li> <li>Rhythm, fluency often poor and volume, pitch of voice not yet well controlled</li> <li>Can use pronouns such as <i>I, me, you, my</i> and <i>mine</i> are beginning to emerge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk frequently all day long, but now ask the child questions and wait for the child to respond. Engage in two-way conversations as often as possible.</li> <li>Use words to describe your feelings and ask child to use words to describe his or her feelings.</li> <li>Talk face-to-face at a distance where the child can clearly see the adult's mouth and facial expressions as he or she speaks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage children to sing songs by singing with them.</li> <li>Parent and child may co-hold the books several times a daily (five to ten minutes only). Child may begin to "read" along. Use your finger to point to the words as you read in order to share new words and/or to repeat reading familiar books that the child enjoys.</li> <li>Ask the child to describe the attributes of objects. Reinforce his or her descriptions and add to the descriptions. Ask the child to tell you how objects are the same or different.</li> </ul>

36 to 48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handles three-word sentences easily—"I want candy"</li> <li>• Has approximately 900–1,000 words in vocabulary</li> <li>• About 90% of what child says can be understood</li> <li>• Verbs begin to predominate, such as "let's go, let's run, let's climb, let's play"</li> <li>• Understands most simple questions dealing with his or her environment and activities</li> <li>• Relates his or her experiences so that they can be followed with reason</li> <li>• Able to reason out such questions as "What do you do when you are hungry?"</li> <li>• Should be able to give his or her gender, name, age</li> <li>• Knows names of familiar animals</li> <li>• Names common objects in picture books or magazines</li> <li>• Knows one or more colors and common shapes</li> <li>• Can usually repeat words of four syllables</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding of <i>over</i> and <i>under</i></li> <li>• Often engages in make-believe</li> <li>• Extensive verbalization as he or she carries out activities</li> <li>• Understands such concepts as <i>longer</i> and <i>larger</i> when a contrast is presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberately point out and label simple attributes of objects (smooth, rough, hot, big, square, round, blue, red, striped, wet, etc.).</li> <li>• Deliberately point out objects that are the same, or different (e.g., smooth/round, hot/cold, big/little, up/down, over/under, open/shut, wet/dry).</li> <li>• Read rhyming stories, songs, or finger plays with rhyming words with the child frequently.</li> <li>• Offer functional cues to build concepts, for example, We eat cereal with? (milk or spoon or bananas)</li> <li>• Support category vocabulary, for example, words related to farms, words related to zoos, words related to school or church or family.</li> <li>• Build semantic connections, for instance, when you child says "It's cold outside" you can reply "Yes, it is freezing or chilly or icy or artic!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read rhyming stories or plays with rhyming words with the child frequently, pointing out how/where words sound alike and sound different.</li> <li>• Play simple word games (e.g., the opposites game, complete the rhyme/complete the song phrase, etc.).</li> <li>• Help your child better understand prepositions by asking her to put the box <i>under</i> the table, <i>next to</i> the spoon, <i>beside</i> the bed, etc.</li> <li>• Introduce relationships (e.g., first, last, right, left, up, down).</li> <li>• Name items in a category and see if your child can identify the category label.</li> <li>• Engage in conversations during storybook reading. Ask your child to predict what will happen next, talk about their favorite character, and the villain. Talk about new or unusual words.</li> <li>• Reading informational texts to your child. Describe new vocabulary.</li> </ul>
48-72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can use many descriptive words spontaneously—both adjectives and adverbs</li> <li>• Knows common opposites: <i>big-little</i>, <i>hard-soft</i>, <i>heavy-light</i>, and the like</li> <li>• Should be able to define common objects in terms of use (hat, shoe, chair)</li> <li>• Should be able to follow three commands given without interruptions</li> <li>• Can use simple time concepts: morning, night, etc,</li> <li>• Speech on the whole should be grammatically correct</li> <li>• Speech should be completely intelligible and socially useful</li> <li>• Can recall a story or a favorite video</li> <li>• Can describe favorite pastimes, meals, books, friends</li> <li>• Should use fairly long sentences and some compound and some complex sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As children put away their toys have them sort the toys into categories. First you demonstrate, "Here you can put all the round toys together in this box". Then allow them to sort on their own. Next, ask them to describe the logic behind their categorization. Your child's logic will fascinate you – encourage their thinking and talk about how you organize you things in the kitchen or closet. Teaching your preschooler how to sort and categorize will help their logical thinking and build their vocabulary.</li> <li>• Read rhyming books, then practice saying/hearing the rhyme, for example, "The fat cat sat on the mat."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewing appropriate science shows with your children, taking them to the farm and the zoo gives them opportunities to build new nouns and adjectives. New experiences give children a lot to talk about.</li> <li>• Have your children cook with you, have them use adjectives to describe the color, texture, and feeling as they make and eat food.</li> <li>• Set up a space and props for dramatic play, include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play telephones</li> <li>• Puppets</li> <li>• Flannel board stories</li> <li>• Dolls and other dramatic play props</li> <li>• Costumes</li> <li>• Literacy materials and props</li> </ul> </li> </ul>