



## Activities to Encourage Speech and Language Development **Birth–2 Years**



- Encourage your baby to make vowel-like and consonant-vowel sounds such as “ma,” “da” and “ba.”
- Reinforce attempts by maintaining eye contact, responding with speech and imitating vocalizations using different patterns and emphasis. For example, raise the pitch of your voice to indicate a question.
- Imitate your baby’s laughter and facial expressions.
- Teach your baby to imitate your actions, including clapping your hands, throwing kisses and playing finger games, such as pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo and the itsy-bitsy-spider.
- Talk as you bathe, feed and dress your baby. Talk about what you are doing, where you are going, what you will do when you arrive and who and what you will see.
- Identify colors.
- Count items.
- Use gestures such as waving goodbye to help convey meaning.
- Introduce animal sounds to associate a sound with a specific meaning: “The doggie says woof woof.”
- Acknowledge their attempt to communicate.
- Expand on single words your baby uses. If your child says, “Mama,” add one more word, such as “Hi Mama” or “Hug Mama.”
- Read to your child. Sometimes “reading” is simply describing the pictures in a book without following the written words. Choose books that are sturdy and have large colorful pictures that are not too detailed. Ask your child, “What’s this?” and encourage naming and pointing to familiar objects in the book.

