

## TALKING AND UNDERSTANDING

*By 13 to 18 months, your growing baby...*

- uses 5-15 words to label objects and people and says exclamatory expressions (“Uh-oh!”, “Whee!”)
- says ‘no’ meaningfully
- names a few familiar objects when asked, “What is this?”
- waves/says “hi” and/or “bye”
- spontaneously vocalizes to request, may vocalize in conjunction with gesturing
- uses single words to express complex thoughts (says “up” and means “Mama, pick me up!”)
- says one word that may represent several basic functions: shouts “Dad!” to gain Dad’s attention, says “Dad?” to ask where his daddy is, says “Dad” to label daddy
- may talk less as he learns to walk
- babbles with inflection like an adult’s conversational speech (varied tone and inflection, like conversation)
- talks/babbles to self during independent play
- tries to sing sounds to music
- listens to short stories, songs and rhymes
- around 18 months of age, understands 200 words



Speech and Language  
Development

*card 37*

### Strategies to Share

- Encourage your child to point to pictures in books to help you know what words he understands. Verbally label pictures for your child to help him learn and understand new words. When you begin working with pictures in books, start with a book that has only one picture per page. If you choose a book with many pictures on a single page, it can be overwhelming for the child to pick out the requested object.
- Continue to label objects in your baby's environment and talk about what is happening during your daily routine.
- Expand on your baby's utterances. For example, if he hands you a ball and says "ball," respond by saying, "You're right, it's a ball. It's a big red ball."
- Your child may notice he communicates more efficiently by using a combination of gestures and words. Encourage and expand the use of sign language to decrease frustration.
- When you arrive or leave, greet others with "hi" and "bye" and help your baby to do so in order for him to learn social greetings and gestures as routine.
- It is very common at this age for a child to choose to master either motor skills or communication skills. Most children pick one and then go back to learn the other when the first is mastered. Do not be alarmed if your previously chatty child stops saying familiar words when learning to walk. Verbal language should reemerge once walking is automatic for your child.
- Music is a wonderful medium for exposing your child to vocabulary. See our **Beyond My Play** section for some of our favorite musicians, and when you can, fill your home with music instead of television.
- Our grandparents used nursery rhymes for a reason! They aren't only fun, but they model the rhythm of speech and recognition of rhyming.
- Bath time is a great time to work on communication because you are down at your child's eye level and your baby is contained. Encourage your baby to imitate silly sounds while he splashes and blows bubbles in the tub.
- Use simple, grammatically correct speech that is easy for your child to understand.
- It is fun to pair sound/word imitation with motor tasks. For example, while hopping like a bunny say the /h/ sound, when swinging on the swing say, "Whee!".