

Language & Learning


Building Conversations

Comment on Objects, Actions and Problems

You are the one who has the words for your baby's interests and curiosity. Now that you have become an expert conversationalist and a mind reader, it is time to become a tour guide.

You do get to take conversational turns, too. Your turns are responsive, but they add information. You know where the important, exciting objects, actions and problems are, and you know how to communicate about them. When you play with your baby, you can point out these features. This is called parallel talk.

You can give your baby a play by play of what is happening in the world. Remember, though, not to hog the turns or forget what your baby is attending to. If you play with your baby, you do it in steps. Different steps call for different parallel talk. For example, when you blow bubbles, you:

	Find the stick in the bubble bottle.	"Where is it?" "Euw! Sticky!" "There it is."
	Get read to blow!	"Ready?" "Blow!"
	See bubbles everywhere, floating and popping.	"Up, up." "Pop, pop, pop!" "All gone."
	Feel wet circles everywhere.	"Wet table. Feels wet."

Some of the other activities you guide your baby through could be changing diapers, dressing, eating or getting ready to go in the car. Each of these activities happens in steps, and every one of those steps can become a conversation. What does your baby attend to during changing? It could be the stinky diaper, but it could be the mobile of birds that you hung over the changing table or crib. When you have your coats on and open the door, does your baby notice the cold air, or the keys you are ready to use?

(continued on page 2)

Practice Examples

Look at the baby in each picture. Think about what responses might expand the baby's idea. Look on the right to see some examples of parallel talk. These comments could expand the idea while sharing the baby's interest and attention.



Baby picking up cheerios from tray.

"Yum!"
"Mmmm...good."



Putting one in mouth -- big smile.

"You like cereal."
"In your mouth!"



Reaching for more.

"More cereal?"
"Find more for mommy."