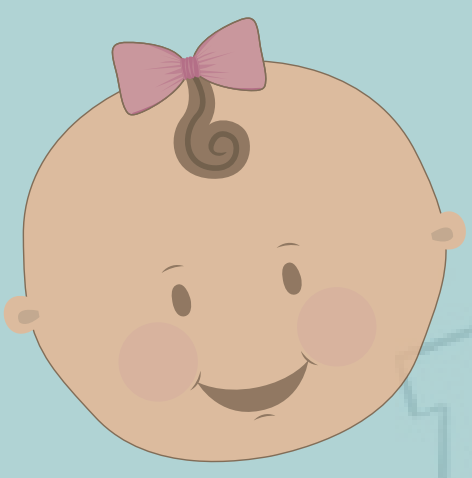
How to Talk to Your Newborn



TALK OFTEN USING SIMPLE, EVERYDAY WORDS

No need to babble when talking with your baby. Talk to her like you're talking with a friend. Use simple words, short sentences and emphasize nouns and verbs. Talk about what you are doing as you do it. "I'm holding you in front of the mirror so i can see your beautiful little face!"

USE A SOOTHING, RHYTHMIC TONE OF VOICE

It will be a little while before your baby can understand your words but from the first days she'll react to the tones she hears in your voice. Speak sharply and she'll probably cry. Cry out in fear while you're holding her and she'll be panic-stricken. A soothing voice makes your baby feel safe.

JUST BECAUSE HE IS NOT LOOKING AT YOU, DOESN'T MEAN HE ISN'T LISTENING!

At this point looking and listening systems are not coordinated. He listens without looking for a source of the sound. And if you watch carefully, you'll see his reactions to your loving words.He may stop crying when he hears you. Soon, he'll look your way and smile when you speak. Your voice is his favorite!

USE EXAGGERATED FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Your baby is mesmorized by your face (just like you are with hers!) When your face lights up with a smile or laugh she will respond. Likewise, a flat, non-emotional facial expression will hinder those important opportunities for interaction and learning. Your face is her favorite thing to look at!

RESPOND TO HIS LITTLE BABY NOISES

When your baby makes a noise and you respond by making a noise back, you're teaching the rudimentary skills of conversation. The more you respond, the more he will talk back to you. This back and forth exchange is what teaches your baby that he's important to you and that he matters a lot. It's the start of a beautiful relationship dance that will last a lifetime!

Complied by Ann McKitrick, MS

The First Relationship by Daniel N. Stern
Your Baby & Child, From Birth to Age Five, Penelope Leach