

Parenting Tips about Talking Together

Adapted from Just in Time Parenting Newsletters

The 8-9 Month Old

- Talking and explaining helps your baby to understand. While you might feel silly talking to your baby, research shows that when you imitate and respond to your baby's sounds, it helps him learn language.

The 15-16 Month Old

- Naming things helps your child's development. Talk about the food. Tell your child what the food is called. Talk about its color and texture. Ask your child to touch and smell it, but don't pressure her to eat it if she isn't ready.

The 23-24 Month Old

- Tell your child what to do —rather than what not to do. Instead of saying, "Don't hold your cup like that" say, "Hold your cup like this." That helps him learn how to do things the right way."

The 29-30 Month Old

- Every time you sing her a song, read her a story, or repeat a nursery rhyme, your toddler learns about language. Your child learns by imitating you and by catching your enthusiasm.
- Children must hear people use language, but they also need adults to listen and respond to their words. Let your toddler tell you stories, "read" books to you, describe things she has seen, and answer your questions.

The 35-36 Month Old

- Listening to your child helps him learn to listen.
- Focus on your child's interests and encourage him to talk with you — Meal time is a perfect place to take a few minutes to do this. In talking with your child, you show you care about his thoughts, experiences, and needs, and that you want to learn more about them.

The 49-50 month Old

- Children take longer than adults to find the right word. Listen as though you have plenty of time.
- Hurrying children or calling attention to their use of the wrong word while they are talking is upsetting and confusing.
- Do not correct your child's grammar or pronunciation. Instead use correct grammar when you speak.