

Take Me and My Cooing Seriously

Sometimes, it seems like no one cares about what I have to say. I babble and coo and make all kinds of interesting noises, but sometimes you're too busy and don't notice.



What I Want You to Know

I know my babbling and cooing don't sound like much right now, but I'm actually talking to you. I'm also listening carefully to the things you say. Every day I'm learning new things about how to communicate. You're my most important teacher.

When you take me and my cooing seriously, it sets the stage for good development and growth in the months and years to come. When you notice me and talk back to me, it makes me feel loved and important. I know you care.

I'm also learning important language and conversation skills. I learn from hearing your voice and imitating what I hear. The sounds and rhythms of language are interesting to me. I want to try them out. Listen closely. One day the sounds I'm

making will become words and sentences.

When you talk to me and then listen for my response, I learn to take turns. This is an important thing for me to learn for our future conversations.

Here's How You Can Help Me:

Oftentimes *we'll connect best when you're holding me close and making eye contact with me.* Other times we may connect when I'm sitting in my child seat.

When I'm looking back at you, *talk to me in gentle, loving tones.* Then give me time to talk to you. When I smile at you or coo back, you know I'm enjoying our give and take. Let's keep this going. Tell me how much you love to hear me talk. *Imitate my sounds and facial expressions* and I'll imitate yours.

When you interact with me this way, it sends rich chemical and electrical impulses through my little brain. The interactions reinforce brain paths that will one day lead to very meaningful interactions between you and me and everybody else in my world.

I love playing sing-song games like "Peek-a-Boo," "Pat-a-Cake," or "Itsy Bitsy Spider." Singing to me in simple words and rhythms really gets my attention. It helps me to learn the rhythms of language and also prepares me to think in abstract ways. How about that!

After a while I may get tired. *I'll let you know when I'm ready to stop* by looking away.

Do you see how important all of this is? Interacting with you lays the groundwork for healthy relationships and language development.

University of Arkansas, United States Department of Agriculture and County Governments Cooperating

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.