



Singing is Joyful and More

Dear Parents,

- Babies love music. They will generally stop what they are doing in order to pay closer attention when they hear a song. If you are singing to them directly, they will make eye contact with you and smile.
- While singing is joyful, it also has many other benefits. Generally singing creates a sense of well-being which in turn causes the brain to release endorphins that help protect the immune system and also act as a memory fixative. Ever wonder why you so easily remember TV ad jingles?
- All early sounds, including music and rhythms, play a profound role in shaping the brain. Linguistics, psychologists, and neuroscientists have recently changed their long-held opinion about the relationship between speaking and singing. The latest data shows that music and language are so intertwined that an awareness of music is critical to a baby's language development. As children grow, music may foster their communication skills. Our sense of song helps us learn to talk, read, and even make friends.

What You Can Do

- Sing to your baby as often as possible.
- Create songs about taking a bath, eating, changing a diaper, or any other routine. Sing about events and things that happen during the day. Your baby doesn't care if you can carry a tune or if your song has rhyme or even makes sense. Just have fun!
- Sing along with songs on the radio.
- Make an effort to learn songs that are sung to your baby at school. Sing these songs at home.
- Play music for your baby when she is awake. Play a variety of music styles, such as country, classical, pop, and jazz. Babies have sensitive hearing so keep the volume low. Music played at a decibel level that is too high can damage a baby's ears.
- Play a musical instrument (xylophone, bells, piano) when you sing. Your baby will enjoy the novelty.
- Smile when you sing. Remember singing is joyful!



Rain, Rain, Go Away

Rain, rain go away.
Come again another day.
Little baby wants to play.
Come again another day.

Rock-a-Bye Baby

Rock-a-bye baby in the tree top.
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock.
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,
And down will come baby, cradle and all.



Dear Parents,

Reading to babies during the early years is credited with helping them learn to speak, enjoy reading for a lifetime, and develop vocabulary. A reading voice and a singing voice sound different from a speaking voice. Each of these ways of communicating are important for helping children learn the sounds, intonations, and nuances of language.

The size of a child's vocabulary is considered by most researchers to be a reliable predictor of a child's reading success. Babies who are sung to, spoken to, and read to during the first 18 months of life will have a vocabulary that consists of 185 more words than that of a peer who was not provided these rich language experiences. This gap is difficult to extinguish and many researchers believe children with poor language starts will never catch up with their peers.

We do know that children who enter kindergarten with rich language experiences will have 1,500 more words than a peer without this background. This number represents about half of the vocabulary most five year olds possess.

What You Can Do

- Read to your child daily. Make it a routine. It may be part of your bedtime or bath time ritual. It doesn't matter when it happens. It matters that it happens.
- Read the same book several times. Your baby will learn a little more about the story and illustrations each time she hears you read it.
- Make books available to your baby. Board books and cloth books are both made to stand the harsh treatment they receive while a young child is learning how to handle them properly.
- When your baby is around 9 months, begin moving your finger below the words as you read. This helps your child understand that words make up the story and that words are made up of letters.
- Make reading time pleasant. Use this as a time to snuggle with your little one.
- Allow older babies to help turn the pages. They usually show an interest in doing this at around 12 months.
- When books aren't available, tell your baby a story. Recite a story from your childhood or just make up a new story. If you make up a new story, insert your baby's name for a special delight!
- Let your baby see you reading. This helps demonstrate the many purposes of reading. Learning to read is part mechanics (learning letter sounds and sight words) and it is part disposition (the desire to read). Demonstrating all the many ways that reading helps you, encourages your baby's desire.

