



Imitating & Expanding with a Babbling Baby

Tips for supporting communication with babies

Do you care for a baby who like to coo, babble, say babababa or make other fun noises? Each time you hear a baby make a noise, you have the chance to turn that noise into a conversation! It all starts by imitating and expanding on what you hear.

What are imitating and expanding?

- Imitating is when you **repeat back** the sounds you hear babies make. If the baby says, “oooo,” you say, “oooo.”
- Expanding is when you **add to** the sounds you hear. You can add sounds or words. If the baby says, “oooo” you might say “oooo, yummy.”

Why imitate and expand?

- When you **say something back**, babies are more likely to continue babbling.
- It lets the baby know you heard him/her.
- Back-and-forth interactions are great for **engaging** babies, and he/she learns to take turns in conversation.
- It is the beginning of learning how to be heard, listen, and respond.

How do I start imitating and expanding?

Here are some questions you can work through to get started:

- What sounds does this baby make?
- Why might this baby be making these sounds?
- How can I add to these sounds?
- When (what time of day or during what activities) does this baby make more sounds?
- When/how am I going to use imitating and expanding with this baby?