Building Language Skills from Birth

Research shows that building a language-rich environment from birth makes a big difference in a child’s ability to speak, read, and write.

Follow these tips to help your child develop language skills early in life.

**Talking & Language**

- **Look** at your child and *talk* to, with, and around her or him often during everyday activities—like when folding laundry or waiting in line—starting from birth.
- **Speak** in your native language as often as possible.
- **Pause** to give your child the chance to “speak” in sounds, grunts, coos, and eventually words and phrases. This helps build conversation skills.
- **Encourage** family members, friends, and others who might be around your child to talk with each other and with your child.

**Reading & Literacy**

- **Read** books to your child daily, starting at birth. Find books for children of all ages at your local library—older ones can even pick their own.
- **Point** to printed text and pictures while reading. Encourage the child to turn the book’s pages, and let him or her touch the words and pictures on the pages, too.
- **Talk** about what happened in the story, and ask what might happen next.
- **Ask** open-ended questions that start with who, what, when, why, or how, and give your child a chance to answer using sounds and words.

For more information, visit [http://1.usa.gov/1QqK15l](http://1.usa.gov/1QqK15l).