Why Lots of Loving Words Help Your Baby Grow and Thrive
Parents are a baby’s first and best teachers

All parents want the best for their baby. And we know healthy food helps grow a healthy baby. But to grow a healthy brain, babies need more. Babies need lots of loving words.

**TALK** — Talk with your baby during everyday activities such as bathtime, mealtime, and changing. *At mealtime, say the names of foods out loud as your baby eats.*

**READ** — Read with your baby every day, and point out images and colors, make facial expressions and ask questions. *Identify food at the grocery store out loud, and read packages and signs to your baby.*

**SING** — Sing your favorite songs and lullabies as a way to engage with your baby, or help soothe them when they are upset. *While you prepare dinner, make up a song about what you are cooking.*

**PLAY** — Pay attention to what interests your baby and help them interact with it every chance you get. *Show your baby different colored fruits and vegetables and let them interact with what interests them.*
PARENTS ARE A BABY’S 1ST AND BEST TEACHERS

TALK  READ  SING  PLAY
Research shows that the number of loving words a baby hears in the first three years of life is the best predictor of success in school and in life.

Therefore, the most effective action parents can take to increase their baby’s educational success and opportunities in life is to talk with their baby. Talk early and talk often.

Talk with your baby in your home language. The home language is the language you would say “I love you” and the language you are most fluent in, even if that is sign language.

Ask these questions:
- Did you know how important it is to talk with your baby?
- When do you enjoy talking with your baby?
- What would help you talk with your baby more?
The most effective action parents can take to increase their baby’s educational success and opportunities in life is to **TALK WITH THEIR BABY.**
You already talk with your baby. May I share with you a few more ways to add even more words to your daily routine?

**GREETINGS** — Greet your baby with a smile, and a hug, in a high pitched voice. Every morning, greet your baby by name and tell them what you are thinking about having for breakfast that day.

**NARRATE ACTIONS** — Narrate everyday activities. When cooking and preparing meals, describe what you are doing and why, as you’re doing it.

**DIRECT ATTENTION** — Engaging your baby helps form new connections in her brain. During meal times, point to your eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and hands as your describe how the food looks, sounds, tastes, smells, and feels.

**TELL STORIES** — Babies are never too young to hear stories. Tell your baby stories about your favorite meal time memories at the dinner table.

**ASK QUESTIONS** — Encourage your baby to respond by asking questions and pausing. Ask your baby what they would like to eat for meals and give them time to respond before continuing the conversation.

**SOOTHE** — Calm your baby by singing. Sing your baby a song by spelling out the letters of your favorite healthy foods, or make up a song about mealtime routines.

Babies respond best to lots of loving words, including words of encouragement, praise and questions. Avoid using directives such as “No, Stop, Be quiet” and instead use positive words and speak in a happy voice.
WAYS TO TALK WITH YOUR BABY

Greetings  Narrate Actions  Direct Attention

Tell Stories  Ask Questions  Soothe