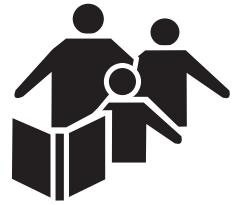


How I Communicate

Although they may not say their first word for almost a year, babies communicate with you immediately. Their behaviors, including eye contact, hand movements, and body positioning, convey their thoughts and feelings. As caregivers, you can “study” your baby by listening, watching, and responding to him or her. Below is a list of ways your baby is communicating with you.



Children birth to 6 months old

- I cry to let my caregiver know what I need.
- I show my distress by sucking on my hand or turning away.
- I stop crying when someone talks to me quietly.
- I turn toward faces, voices, and sounds.
- I imitate sounds I already know.
- I show excitement when I want things to continue.

Children 6 to 12 months old

- I begin to understand social gestures.
- I wave bye-bye.
- I may say dada or mama to refer to specific people.
- I look at what others are looking at.
- I use nonverbal requests and gestures to let caregivers know what I want (e.g., pointing to objects, raising arms to be picked up).


Children 12 to 24 months old

- I begin to talk with recognizable words.
- I understand simple verbal directions (“go get your shoes”).
- I initiate routines and games like peek-a-boo.
- I ask a lot of questions, such as “What’s this?”
- I can talk about things that are not in sight.

Children 24 to 36 months old

- I ask lots and lots of questions such as “Why?”
- I use sentences.
- I start and engage in short conversations.
- I can talk about things happening in the past and future.

Adapted with permission from the “What I Am Like” handout created by the Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) project at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

 For more information on child development, see the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eicclearinghouse.org>.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.

