

# 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 child 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 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, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <https://eiclearinghouse.org>

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