

# Talking to your preterm baby

## 36+ weeks



As your baby approaches term age or around 36 weeks they will open their eyes more and will stay quiet and alert for longer periods of time. This is a great time for 'talking' together. Your baby will be learning about routines and begin to anticipate what happens next.

Position your baby so that they are able to focus on your face and make eye contact. The ideal distance for a baby to see your face is felt to be around 'breast feeding' distance.



Allow enough time for your baby to focus on your face and to respond.

Some babies enjoy hearing you talk to them while you are feeding them, other babies prefer a quiet environment so they can concentrate on feeding. All babies are different, and your baby will let you know what they prefer if you watch and observe their behavioural cues.

Watch your baby's face and imitate facial expressions such as sticking out your tongue or opening your mouth. You may notice that your baby will look at you for longer periods.



Describe what you are doing as babies learn to anticipate what happens next. This is good training for babies for when they are older and understand what you are saying.

Talk softly to your baby while maintaining eye contact. You can sing any song or talk to your baby about anything. They already know your voice and will find it soothing to listen to you! This is a great time to start reading to your baby. This improves language and builds attention – it promotes and stimulates brain development.

Talk and sing to your baby when you are changing their nappies or when you bathe them.



Learn your baby's behavioural cues – this is how your baby communicates with you.

For more information:



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Motor

Attention/Regulation

Relationships

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