

The most important lesson...

Talk talk talk!

Children with a hearing loss learn to talk in the same way as other children – they listen to people in their environment and learn from them. The difference is that children with hearing loss cannot hear at a distance or in background noise as well as hearing children, so this cuts down on their opportunities for learning. Make up for this by talking more in good listening conditions. Your child's awake time is your chance to give them more, so talk, talk, talk!

What should I say?

Talk about the 'here and now', as this has the most meaning for your baby. Talk your way through preparing the bottle, feeding, changing nappies, playing with toys, dressing, going out and so on.

How should I say it?

Use short phrases, never single words. It takes your baby a short time to tune in and listen so if you only say one word, such as "rattle", by the time they listen, the word is over. Instead, put it into a short phrase and repeat: "Shake, shake, shake the rattle!" This gives your baby more to listen, and also provides them with a nice model of how words go together, as well as the rhythm of speech.

Repeat what you say several times. You may even like to change what you say slightly each time, for example, looking in a mirror, you might say: "I see Jacob! Do you see Jacob? There's Jacob!"

Use lots of facial expression and lots of intonation in your voice. This makes you more interesting and more likely to gain and maintain your child's attention.

Most importantly - talk to your baby as if he can hear perfectly.

