

The Development of Conversation

It is important to understand how conversation develops in order to see your child's growth and know what to expect your child to be able to do.

1. Repeat sounds – In the beginning babies play with sounds for pure pleasure: “Lalalalalala,” “Up up up up”

2. Next they begin to state their thoughts aloud – basically speaking to themselves: “I sit here.” “This me seat.”

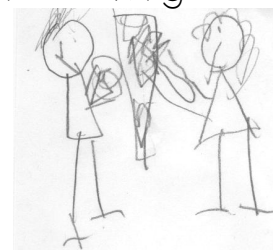
3. Then children begin to take turns talking – often not even following the same topic, but one child speaks, then the other.

Child 1: “I’ll get the apples.”

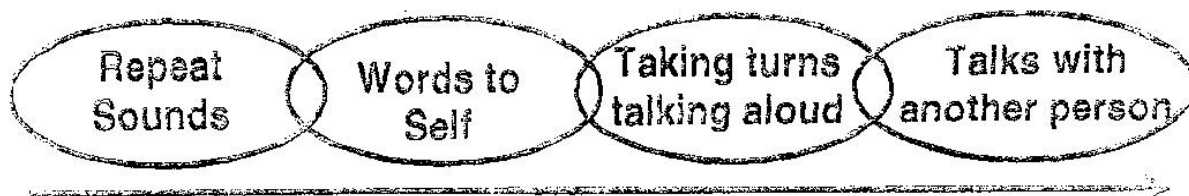
Child 2: “I’m calling the doctor.”

Child 1: “I picked lots of apples!”

Child 2: “Doctor, my baby is sick!”



4. Finally they begin to engage socially with another person in true conversation. They take turns and talk about the same subject. They begin to understand that they have an audience and the need for actual communication.



In order to help children develop conversation skills we must converse with them often. You have the power to influence your child's oral language development through your daily interactions. Here are some ideas to support their growth at each stage:

When child is at this stage:

The adult can support by:

Repeats sounds

Stretch sounds into words

Says words to self

Repeat the words – or elaborate – assign meaning, so child will know you are listening.

Children take turns talking

Point out to each speaker the intentions of the other.

“Megan wants to play dolls.
I think her baby is sick!”

Socialized conversation

Continue to help the children understand each other's intent