



Baby Babble - What Does It Mean?

FIRST-TIME PARENTS

ARTICLE

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3 MINS

Whether your baby is pedaling joyfully with their hands and feet, beaming from ear to ear, or crying as hard as they can in bed, they are obviously trying to tell you something. But what?

Babies express themselves from birth: expressions, smiles, babbling, gesticulating all over the place. In just a few weeks your baby will refine their "language" to enable you to understand what they want and what they are feeling. Parents discover with surprise and happiness at what point their newborn baby is a fervent communicator. A short course in interpreting baby's vocabulary.

Smiles that mean so much...

When your baby smiles, it is not only to show you that they are happy but also to express a number of different emotions, always practical for communicating with you! There are different types of smiles:

- the "reflex smile" which is innate in newborn babies: it occurs when baby falls

asleep after a nice bottle for instance... It is a reflex expressing physical well-being but it no doubt makes you melt!

- the smile and twinkling eyes indicating joy and appreciation. It's as if your baby was telling you "Thank you for looking after me, I love it!".
- the smile and clapping hands meaning "I know you and like being with you".

Why does my baby cry?

For babies, crying is a language in itself and you should let your baby express themselves as it is a way of communicating with you. Listen to your baby, they have lots of things to tell you...

- When your baby starts crying harder and their voice becomes more strident, then it means they are hungry!
- When your baby starts grunting, they no doubt want to go to sleep.
- If your baby starts crying suddenly and their voice is piercing and high-pitched, then your baby is more than likely in pain.
- When your baby cries hard and becomes red in the face, they are expressing their anger or frustration.
- If your baby cries continuously at the end of the day, then this is probably due to irritability after a long day. These episodes help your baby adjust to the sleep-waking cycle and to unload the emotions accumulated during the day.

Gestures full of meaning

As of 6 or 8 months, your baby will begin to use gestures to make themselves understood. They draw your attention to them by hiding their face behind their hands, rubbing their eyes to tell you they are tired, pointing with their finger to "ask for something" or reaching out their arms to be picked up. Their little gestures become increasingly frequent and complex, forming a unique language. A way of speaking even before having acquired verbal language.

This method of communication is used widely in English-speaking countries, notably in day-nurseries. It has even been baptized "baby sign language" and is based on the simple principle that each word is associated with a sign. To indicate "silence" the index finger is placed vertically on the lips; to say yummy, we rub the tummy etc. These are easy games that you can play with your baby. It will help them acquire verbal language in a fun way!