Did you know... ?

Children learn about language by listening to parents and caregivers talk and by joining in conversation. Talking with your baby or toddler every day helps her develop important language skills. Helping your child develop these skills when she is young will help her understand what she hears, and later, what she reads.

Very young children can understand spoken words long before they can speak any of them — so talk with them throughout the day and you will be amazed at how your child responds!

Here's how... 🔍

- Talk to your baby in "parentese," which is talking in a sing-song way, stretching out your vowels.

- Re-tell stories with your child using puppets or props. Talk about what is going on in the pictures.

- Name things (real objects and pictures in books) as you go through the day. Use songs and nursery rhymes.

- Make sure your child has lots of chances to talk *with* you, not just listen to you talk.

- Ask your baby a question and then answer for her. "Your diaper needs changing; let's do that right now, OK? Good!"

- Use the language that is most comfortable for you.

Read 📖

"Uh-Oh!" by Shutta Crum

This nearly wordless story of a beach adventure leaves lots of room for storytelling... along with a toddler's favorite phrase at each mishap, "Uh-oh!"

Start by telling and showing your child what is happening in each picture. Then ask questions, such as "Uh-oh! What happened to the sunglasses?" Ask your child to guess what might happen next. "The little girl is going down the slide... what do you think will happen to the bucket?" Point to the word "Uh-oh!" each time you or your child say it.

Also by Shutta Crum:

Choosing Books ✓

More books like "Uh-Oh!"
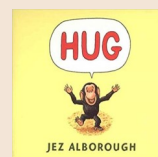
"Overboard!" by Sarah Weeks

"Ball" by Mary Sullivan

"Hug" by Jez Alborough

"Dear Zoo" by Rod Campbell

"All the World" by Liz Garton Scanlon

"Shh! We Have a Plan!" by Chris Haughton

"Emily's Balloon" by Komako Sakai

Talk 💬

One of the most important things you can do with your baby or toddler is respond to their babbling by babbling or talking back to them. It is called "serve and return" interaction. This short video explains what it does for your baby's brain:

http://tinyurl.com/Harvard-serve-return

Ready to Write ✏️

Make small slits in the plastic lid of a can, replace lid on can, then let child push tongue depressors or popsicle sticks into the slits.

Poke a small hole in lid or side of can. String a ribbon into hole and tie knots in both ends. Repeat with additional holes and tie more ribbons. Put lid back on, tape closed. Little fingers pull ribbons up and out without ribbon coming completely free.

Play ✋

Slowly, Slowly

Slowly, slowly, very slowly
(Slowly walk two fingers up child's arm)
Creeps the garden snail.
(Keep going very slowly)
Slowly, slowly, very slowly,
(Walk fingers up other arm)
Up the garden trail. *(End at shoulder or neck)*
Quickly, quickly, very quickly,
(Run two fingers quickly up one arm)
Goes the little mouse.
Quickly, quickly, very quickly,
(Run fingers up other arm quickly)
To his little house!
(Tickle)

Sing 🎵

A Sailor Went to Sea

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea-
(Hold baby in your arms as if he/she were lying in a boat and gently rock them in your arms)

To see what he could see, see, see
(While holding baby, pretend to look around with your hand at the top of your forehead.)

But all that he could see, see, see
(While holding baby, pretend to look around with your hand at the top of your forehead.)

Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea!
(Tickle baby's belly.)

Toddlers can sing song over and over, faster each time.

https://supersimple.com/song/a-sailor-went-to-sea/

At your library... 🏛️

Every April there is a celebration of children and reading, El día de los niños/El día de los libros. It is a day "for remembering the power of words and books in the lives of our young people and for honoring all the languages spoken in the homes of this country," says Pat Mora, children's author.

Check with your library for any special Día events and books in other languages.