

Learning Speech Sounds from Birth

- Learning speech is a complex process.
 - It involves far more than just ensuring that your tongue and lips are in the right place at the right time.
 - Process of learning speech sounds begins at birth.
 - Babies are born with 'in-built' abilities to learn speech sounds, but they only develop these skills with the help from the world around them and more specifically from those speaking to them.
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- A baby's first communication is a cry.
 - A cry is a reflex action which babies use to convey their needs.
 - Gradually cries become different to signal different meaning e.g. hunger cry, tired cry etc.
 - A baby's range of noises increases and cooing soon turns to babble.
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- Babble is when babies start to experiment with consonant and vowel sounds and begin to make longer strings e.g. mamamabebebebebeb.
 - Babies babble for fun.
 - Babble includes English and non-English sounds. As parents we babble back and interpret words to our babies, reinforcing English/home language sounds.
 - Over time babies stop making non-English sounds because they no longer hear them.
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- Intonation patterns also start to emerge.
 - From babble, babies begin to use familiar words e.g. mummy, daddy. These words are often not clear at first, but by repeating them back we help to mode speech sounds in these words.

Cry ⇒ Cooing ⇒ Babble ⇒ First Words

