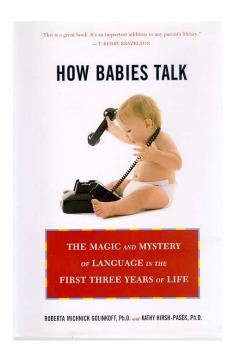
Language Input Matters Earlier than You Think!



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Disclosure

I am the mother* of the

QUILS: Quick Interactive Language Screener

for children ages 3 through 5 (Brookes Publishing)

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- Number 1-6 in your notes
- Please cheat! Talk to the person next to you!







Answer these questions for typical, hearing babies



Babies recognize their own names at

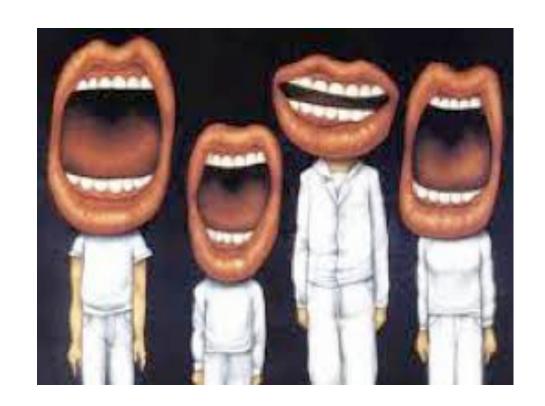
- A) 2 months
- B) 4 months
- C) 6 months
- D) Adolescence (when they choose not to respond anyway)
- 2. At what age can typical babies understand sentences like, "Big Bird is tickling Cookie Monster?
- A) 13 months
- B) 17 months
- C) 25 months
- D) 30 months

- 3. Babies show they have learned about their native language vowels in experiments using sucking at
- A) Birth
- B) 6 months
- C) 12 months
- D) 18 months
- 4. Babies can calculate statistics on running speech at
- A) 2 months
- B) 4 months
- C) 6 months
- D) No such thing

5. When do parents have an impact on the frequency of their babies' vocalizations? A) In utero B) At birth C) 2 months D) 4 months 6. By _____ months babies have about 10 words in their comprehension vocabulary A) 2 months 6 months C) 10 months

D) 12 months

But why care about language?





Why should we care if children know more or fewer words?

· Language helps you capture knowledge, e.g.,



- Language helps you engage in self-regulation
- Language in K single best predictor of school achievement in all subjects at grades 3 and 5!
- NAEP scores vocab predicts reading comprehension
- Language skill predicts health care outcomes

You will be judged your whole life by



What do typical HEARING babies learn about language in the first year of life?



Another way to think about this: What are DHH babies missing if they don't get hearing aids or CIs months by 12 months of age?

Some assumptions about babies!







Born pattern seekers! If there is a visual or auditory pattern, they will find it.

Eager to learn – regardless of ethnic background or social class – Gopnik story in WSJ study by Begus et al.

Highly social – learn better with people present than not – even prefer to look at face-like configurations in the womb!



- 1. Babies recognize their own names at
- A) 2 months
- B) 4 months
- C) 6 months



- D) Adolescence (when they choose not to respond anyway)
- 2. At what age can typical babies understand sentences like, "Big Bird is tickling Cookie Monster?
- A) 10 months
- B) 12 months
- C) 14 months
- D) 17 months



3. Babies show they have learned about their native language vowels in experiments using sucking at

A) Birth

- B) 6 months
- C) 12 months
- D) 18 months



Mean age = 33 hours Prefer variants of Swedish 'ya' to English 'i'

- 4. Babies can calculate statistics on running speech at
- A) 2 months
- B) 4 months
- C) 6 months
- D) No such thing



5. When do parents have an impact on the frequency of their babies vocalizations?

- A) In utero
- B) Early birth- 32 weeks
- C) 2 months
- D) 4 months

Adult-child interactions supportive of language development start *immediately* after birth.

- 6. By _____ months babies have about 10 words in their *comprehension* vocabulary
- A) 1
- B) 2
- **C)** 6
- D) 12



How do babies come to understand what words mean?



The earliest demonstration of babies 'hooking' sounds to meanings

6 months!

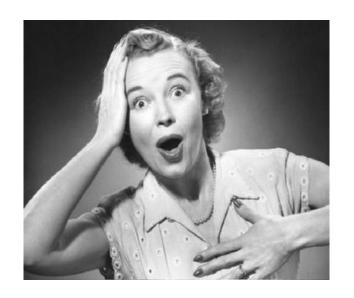




Find Mommy! Where's Mommy?

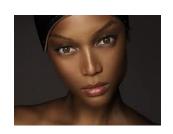
Brace yourself ---

About to challenge accepted "wisdom"



"It is widely accepted that infants begin learning their native language not by learning words, but by discovering features of the speech signal: consonants, vowels, and combinations of these sounds.

Learning to understand words ... is said to come later, between 9 and 15 mo of age, when infants develop a capacity for interpreting others' goals and intentions" (Bergelson & Swingley, 2011).



But this is wrong!



Between 6 and 9 months babies understand lots of words: names for body parts, food items, frequently heard words in a baby's life.















Think about what these findings mean....

Input matters far earlier thought!

During the FIRST 6 MONTHS of life, babies are pulling apart the speech stream, finding the words, calculating statistics, storing frequently occurring words, and more...

Both typical and especially DHH children need to receive input asap!



Babies are so NOT vegetables!



Conversational duets

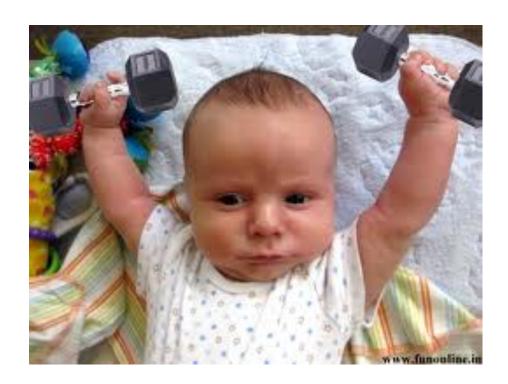
-in which what the adult says and does is **CONTINGENT on the child's focus**

are the interactions that fuel language growth





CONCLUSION: Children need to do some heavy lifting to learn language but if we help them with conversation tailored to their interests, they can make great progress!



Thanks to....

Funding from







The best lab ever



Dr. Kathy Hirsh-Pasek



The parents and kids who made the research possible

Thanks for listening!

