



## Taking Turns?

The fundamental basis of social communication and conversational skills is through learning the art of turn taking. This can be taught right from birth. Not only does it encourage expressive language development, it also strengthens the bond between you and your baby. The idea of turn taking involves a back and forth volley between you and your child. In other words, when you say a sound or word, you are passing the ball to your child indicating that it's their turn to talk. It might take some time before your baby learns how to pass the ball back. This is why waiting, expectant looks and pausing are important skills that indicate to your baby that it is her turn to talk. When the baby does vocalize back, you respond to this vocalization with another turn, therefore passing the ball back and forth between you and your child.

This skill is important as it teaches your baby or child that what they have to say is important, therefore strengthening your bond. It also teaches the child that communication is a two-way exchange and that the parent is engaged in what you have to say.

The child and mother's ability to turn take has strong correlation with expressive language outcomes. In a study conducted through MIT and Harvard, they found that turn taking had the best outcomes for verbal scores, despite differences in parent education and socioeconomic status. It also was a better indicator of strong verbal skills over just parent input or child vocalizations alone. That is because there is a relationship between language experience and brain activity. This study accounts it to

- More child directed language
- Interactive language
- The child adapts their speech to the adult model
- The adult learns how to talk to their child in a way that the child can understand
- It has both linguistic and interactional features important for brain development

So have more conversations with your child. Not only will you be growing your relationship, but also their brain!

For more information go to <https://www.lena.org/conversational-turns-research/>