



Baby Talk: Resources to Support the People Who Work with Infants and Toddlers

Issue No. 104 January 2020

Opportunities for States To Improve Infant Health Outcomes

The United States is experiencing an infant health crisis. But a jarring percentage of the country's infant health crisis disproportionately affects communities of color. To learn how your state is doing (and what they could be doing), go to <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2019/12/17/478382/opportunities-states-improve-infant-health-outcomes/> and scroll down to **INTERACTIVE 1**: Exploring Infant Health Outcomes Across Race and Ethnicity and by state, and **INTERACTIVE 2**: Opportunities for States to Improve Infant Health Outcomes, where you'll also find an issue brief that summarizes trends and findings—pairing these data on health outcomes with information on state-level policy action.

Reading to Infants and Young Children Boosts Their Vocabulary

Shared reading between family members and very young children is associated with stronger vocabulary skills for nearly all children by age 3, say physicians at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. According to research published in *The Journal of Pediatrics*, this is true also for children who genetically may be vulnerable to barriers in learning, attention and behavior development. Researchers found that shared reading with children at 1 year old was associated with higher vocabulary scores on a standardized assessment at age 3. Children with genetic variations that put them at risk fared just as well as their peers on the assessment when shared reading was conducted at age 1. <https://news.rutgers.edu/research-news/young-children-and-infants-read-parents-have-stronger-vocabulary-skills/20191120#.Xgq8Xm5FzAw>

How Long Should Babies Sleep?

A good night's rest is great for babies and parents. Infants, aged 4 to 11 months, get an average of 12 to 15 hours of sleep per day. But what happens if a baby isn't sleeping that long? Learn more from this information bulletin and video in English and Spanish. <https://www.childtrends.org/videos/how-long-should-babies-sleep>

How Music Can Help Premature Babies

To help the brains of very premature newborns develop as well as possible despite the stressful environment of intensive care, researchers propose an original solution: music written especially for them. And the first results are surprising: Medical imaging reveals that the neural networks of premature infants who have listened to this music are developing much better. Learn more at <https://www.unige.ch/communication/communiqués/en/2019/la-musique-aide-le-cerveau-des-grands-prematures-a-se-construire/>

Making the Most of a Baby's First Words

Before babies learn to talk in — in English, Spanish, or whatever — they babble and coo, playing with sound. Critical milestones for a baby learning to talk happen in the first five years of life, when a baby's brain is rapidly developing. During that time, a baby's speech development depends on the "baby talk" skills of family and caregivers as well as the baby's. Learn more at <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart/> <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/Que-tal-habla-y-oye-su-nino/> or <https://www.webmd.com/parenting/baby/baby-talk#1>

Baby Talk is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features high quality, readily available, and free resources. Resources **highlighted in yellow** are available in English and Spanish. To join the listserv, send an email with no message or signature block to subscribe-babytalk@listserv.unc.edu

All or part of Baby Talk may be freely shared or copied. For more information, please contact Camille Catlett at camille.catlett@unc.edu