

## TALKING IS TEACHING: TIPS FOR TALKING WITH MULTIPLE CHILDREN

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Talking, reading, singing, and counting with children from 0-5 years of age helps them learn because the more words and numbers children hear, the faster their brains grow. Using everyday moments to talk to your children can make a difference that lasts a lifetime.

Of course, talking to one child is easy, but it's a different story when you have two ... or three ... or five! You're not alone. For most parents and grandparents, it's tough to involve multiple kids of different ages in an activity at the same time. But you can do it!

First, remember that older kids can be your partners in talking, reading, and playing with infants and toddlers, so make them part of your teaching team. Next, develop a routine. Reading a book before bed, playing after dinner, or singing in the car are all ways to fit learning activities into the day. In no time, children will begin to look forward to these moments.

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### Here are some more tips:

- Let older children lead the conversation by asking them to talk about what they see on a walk, in the grocery store, on a car ride, or while riding the bus.
- Encourage your older child to describe a favorite toy to your younger one. This is a great way to get him or her to talk about colors, shapes, and why the toy is a favorite.
- Designate one child the "Talk Team Captain," and let him or her help decide what the family will be talking about at any given time—like during dinner.
- Reading books aloud that are appropriate for older children helps keep them engaged. Don't worry that your infant won't understand. Help them hear as many words as possible during the first five years.
- Preschool-age children can help you engage your baby by pointing to and naming the pictures in a story book, or bringing you objects around the house to name.
- Practice counting blocks, objects in the kitchen, or socks in the laundry. Older children can point out colors and patterns.

