

AGES
0-1
p.147

AGES
1-2
p.151

AGES
2-3
p.155

AGES
3-5
p.156

AGES
5-8
p.158

AGES
8-12
p.160

You talkin' to me? She loves to hear it

That's my name!

AGES
0-1

Of all the words you say to your baby as you feed, diaper, and play with her, there's one that really stands out in her mind: her name. Most likely, you say it more often and with more emphasis than other words, so she's quickly learned how to recognize it. By the time your baby is about 6 months old, she'll turn her head when she

hears you say it—and maybe even give you an especially big grin in return.

Name recognition is an important first-year milestone. Your baby's name gives her an anchor in the babble of speech she hears. Because she can pick it out of a sentence, she's able to pay more attention to the word that follows, says Heather Bortfeld, Ph.D., a psychologist

at Texas A & M University in College Station. So if her name is Maya, saying "Maya's cup" will help her understand what the word "cup" means faster than "This is your cup" would.

Don't feel you have to toss her name into every sentence, though! Simply do what comes naturally and her language skills will progress just fine.

—MARIKO THOMPSON BECK