



Developing communication through play with your deaf baby or toddler

- It is not necessary to buy expensive toys for your deaf child. There are many charity shops selling toys in good condition. Major supermarkets also sell toys at reasonable prices
- If you are buying toys make sure they are safe for your child's age group. It is often better to buy well known makes such as Tomy & Little Tikes which last well and are clearly labelled
- There are Surestart centres which loan out toys through their toy libraries
- Public libraries have a good selection of children's books on free loan and may run regular story sessions for pre-school children
- At local Mother & Toddler groups your child can enjoy a range of toys and learn to play with other children
- When playing and communicating with your child remember to keep background noise to a minimum - switch off the radio or TV / close the kitchen door if the washing machine is on
- Keep toys downstairs in a box where they are accessible to your child. Encourage him to help tidy toys away when you finished playing
- Make as much time as possible to play with your child, communicating about what he is doing and responding to his attempts to communicate with you
- The following pages give a rough guide to ideas and toys for play with 0 to 3 year olds but all children are different and will have their favourite activities

Play materials:

In the early months your baby will be mostly interested in faces. Young babies are also drawn to bold patterns - particularly in black and white

Appropriate toys would include -

Cot mobile	Small soft toys
Teething ring	Light & sound toys
Lightweight rattles	Cloth books



Six months to 1 year

Developing Communication

- Daily routines such as bathing / feeding / nappy-changing provide excellent opportunities for communicating in a natural way with your baby. The same words and simple phrases can be repeated several times throughout the day during the routine activity until your baby begins to associate what he is hearing to what is happening at the time. Examples of this are - 'dinner-time' / 'who's pooped' / all gone / night-night / splash / arms up /
- Rhythm is important for speech, and later for reading. Singing simple songs and rhymes with actions & movement enables your baby to hear the same language repeated over and over in a tuneful way. The use of facial expression and gesture also helps your baby to recognize the song and anticipate what comes next.
- Extend the range of activity and anticipation games you play with your baby - peek-a-boo / How big's Ellie? Etc. Your baby should begin to recognise the game from your words or actions and anticipate what comes next
- Play give and take games with your baby's toys - encourage him to hand over an object on request - give it to me / can I have it / my turn. Pass it back saying - do you want it / your turn / there it is
- Look at simple books with your baby with clear illustrations. Point out objects in the book, naming them and making appropriate sounds.
Where's the dog? There he is. Woof woof
Where's the train? Here it comes. Choo choo
- Use pointing to encourage your baby to shift their attention to what you are talking about. When your baby starts to point, follow their lead and talk about what they are pointing to - That's your cup. Do you want a drink?

Play sessions should be short and frequent and should be determined by what your baby shows interest in and what he enjoys doing

Appropriate toys could include:

Soft balls to roll or throw	Sound making toys & instruments
Simple books - lift-the-flap / feely	Musical toys to bounce / dance to
Stacking & nesting toys	Baby mirrors
Pop up toys	Soft toys to cuddle & pat



1 - 2 Years

Development of Language

- Be alert to any attempt your child makes to vocalise and reinforce the sounds you want to hear. Make a note of any times when he uses particular vocalisation to identify a person or an object.
- Singing or saying simple repetitive rhymes e.g. Round and Round the Garden, Pat a Cake etc. will help your child become more aware of voice and rhythm.
- Remember to speak naturally - there is more to speech than single words. Some children give back a great deal while others give back very little.
- **At this stage it is more important to monitor how much your child understands rather than how much he speaks.**

Play Materials and Activities

Play generally becomes more imaginative and constructive. Mouthing toys usually stops at about 12 months and there is now a tendency to throw objects.

Activities which will encourage curiosity and exploration are:

- Games of building and knocking over
- Emptying and filling various containers
- Opening and closing toys with lids and doors.
- Pulling apart and separating construction toys e.g. Duplo, Stickle bricks.
- Posting games.
- Pulling and pushing objects.
- Dressing and undressing can be made into a play and language activity.
- Hiding and finding toys again.

- Towards the age of 2 your child will begin to recognise familiar objects and people in books and gradually associate toys with the real objects they represent. Provide child size tools and make time to allow your child to 'help' around the house.
- He may become attached to one particular toy and use it as a source of comfort.
- By about 18 months children begin to associate objects e.g. cup and saucer, brush and pan. They become interested in adult activities and will mime cooking and sweeping.

Play sessions should be short and frequent as a toddler's attention span is short. Take every opportunity to talk to your child using:

• Stacking toys	• Musical toys
• Inset jigsaws	• Sweeping set
• Finger paints	• Telephone
• Doll with bed, cover, brush, bottle etc.	• Sand tray and containers
• Posting boxes	• Simple books with clear illustrations
• Paper and chalks, colour pencils etc	• Vehicles with space to load/unload
• Toy garage with vehicles	• Ball to take turns with - roll / throw



2 to 3 Years

Development of language

- Any situation in the home is potentially valuable to develop language with your young child - sorting washing, setting the table, cooking, shopping etc
- Make sure the language you are using is natural but you may have to simplify some sentences for your child to understand
- Be enthusiastic so your child knows you are enjoying playing with him
- Follow your child's interest, encouraging activities which are exciting and challenging
- Model good language for your child to copy

Skills which usually develop during the third year

- Early matching - objects / shapes / pictures / colours
- Early puzzles - fitting a few pieces together
- Completing inset trays
- Threading beads
- Building with blocks / duplo etc.
- Counting by rote to 3 or 5
- Holding a pencil and drawing a line
- Attempting to draw a face or person
- Early pretend play - feeding doll / making tea with toy tea set / parking cars in garage etc.

Play sessions will last for longer periods now if your child finds the activity interesting. He will usually play alongside, rather than 'with' other children at this age. Take every opportunity to talk to your child using:

Early puzzles & Inset trays	Play teaset
Threading games	Dolls & cot / pushchairs etc
Building blocks	Toy garage & cars
Objects to count	Play house & people
Paper and crayons	Simple repetitive story books (anticipation)