



Waiting

Let's Wait

Did you know **waiting** is one of the most powerful things you can do to help your child communicate?

Why wait?

To give our children the chance to let **us** know, with sounds, actions, looks, gestures, or words, what **they** need, want, or are interested in.

To give ourselves the chance to respond with actions, sounds, or words, of our own, that will match **their** needs, wants, or interests.

What are we waiting for?

For them to begin the interaction to let us know what they need, want, or are interested in.

At first children **can't** send a message "on purpose" - they are discovering how to do this, with our help, and **some** things just **can't** wait. We can still **interpret** what they do and lay the foundations for what happens next.

What might we see or hear?	What might we do?	What might we say?
Crying or fussing.	Interpret their sounds to work out if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are hungry or in pain.• Need a nappy change.• Have woken and need some attention or comfort.	Something that fits their needs and feelings at that moment. <i>"What a hungry boy".</i> <i>"Oh oh, you're all wet".</i> <i>"It's ok, Daddy's here".</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are ready for company. • Need help to get back to sleep. 	<p><i>“Up you get”.</i></p> <p><i>“Time to sleep, shshsh”.</i></p>
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Later children start to show interest in more things as well as people. They look for longer, go towards or bring objects of interest, or point at them and begin to travel beyond **discovering**, to **communicating** on purpose.

Waiting gives us the chance to work out how best to respond at the time.

What might we see or hear?	What can we do?	What might we do or say?
Looking with interest at something in the room e.g., a mobile or even a light on the wall.	Wait till we've worked out what it might be by following the direction of their gaze.	Say something about what has got their attention <i>“Wow, look at those lights”.</i>
Babbling.	Wait till there is a pause.	Babble back using the same sounds.
Vocalising and pointing.	Wait to give yourself time to work out what they are pointing at.	Tell them what the object is called.
Trying to get something out of reach.	Wait to work out what they want you to do.	Interpret their intention with your words, <i>“Get your teddy?”</i>
Throwing something they were enjoying playing with.	Wait to work out why they have thrown it.	Interpret their behaviour with words that fit, <i>“Let's fix it”.</i>

Pointing towards the door and saying, "Mum-mum".	Wait to work out what they are trying to explain.	Interpret the word plus the gesture as if it's a longer message, " <i>Yes, Mummy's upstairs</i> ".
Looking out of the window and saying, "tat der".	Wait till you can get near to see what they can see.	Interpret their words and agree, " <i>Yes, the cat is out there</i> ".

Every time you **wait** you:

- Give your child a chance to take their turn.
- Help yourself to model the words they need to fit the situation.
- Let them know you are interested in what they have to communicate so they will want to stay in the conversation for longer at every stage.