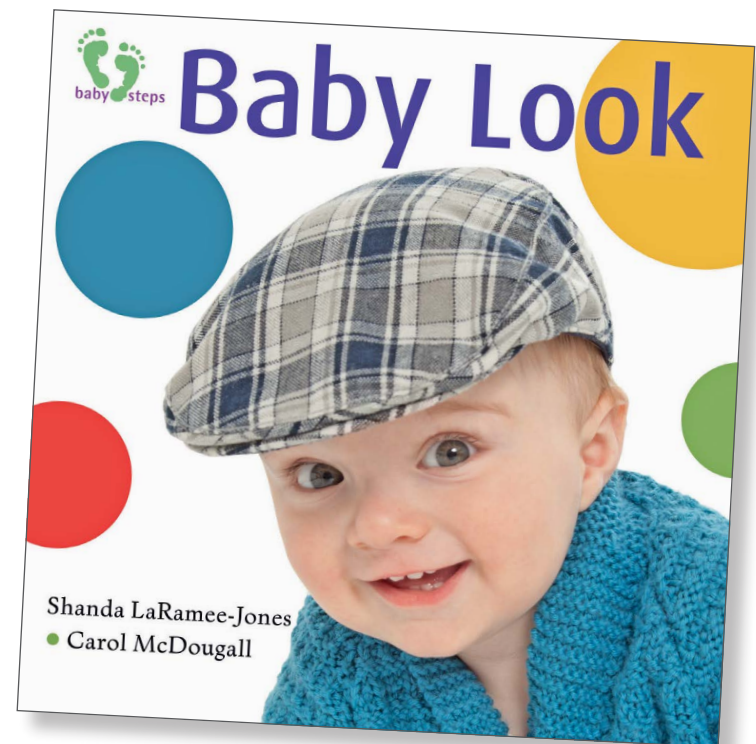


# Can we talk? Promoting Oral Language

Sometimes, we'd give anything for our kids to just be quiet.

Thank goodness they're not really programmed that way! Processing language, talk in particular, is a key part of being a skillful communicator. Our ability to communicate can affect everything we do, reading and writing, making friends, even getting a job. You can give your little one a jump start on skillful communication by doing several simple things:

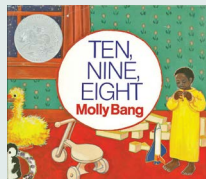
- **Make communication a positive** thing from the beginning! Talk to your baby. Snuggle while you do. Make eye contact and smile.
- **Read to your child** using variation in your voice, louder and quieter, different voices for different characters, faster and slower. This can help your child start to understand how to control her own voice and when quiet is more appropriate than loud.
- **Invite your child** to talk WITH you. Babies can babble back and forth with us if we repeat the sounds they make. (This is the beginning of understanding turn-taking in conversation.) Older children have lots to say!
- **Use a trick** called "validate and expand". When your child shares news with you such as, "I finded a frog!" Instead of correcting her, validate what she said but expand on it so she learns new words and concepts, too: "Wow! You found a leopard frog!"
- **Be interested.** Really listening and asking questions can invite more and richer talk with your child.



*Raising Readers' 4-month selection for 2014*

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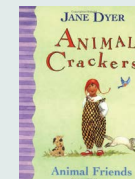
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