



# What is Infant-Directed Speech?

## Example for Parents trying to use IDS effectively with kids Getting Dressed:

While putting on clothes, say, "Let's put on your shirt—oveeerr your heeaaad! Peekaboo, I see you!" in a sing-song voice with fun facial expressions.

This turns routines into bonding moments that boost language learning.



This is a great example of Infant-Directed Speech (IDS). She gently taps the baby to get their attention and uses ASL to support understanding and build vocabulary



## Why is IDS Important?

- Helps babies recognize speech sounds.
- Encourages social interaction and bonding.
- Supports vocabulary and language growth.
- Makes communication fun and engaging!

## How to Use IDS Effectively

- Speak in a sing-song voice with varied pitch.
- Use short, simple sentences.
- Emphasize keywords and sounds.
- Maintain eye contact and respond to your baby's sounds.
- Repeat words and phrases to reinforce learning.

IDS is the way we talk to babies to help them learn language. It is different from how we talk to adults because it catches their attention and makes it easier for them to understand.

Here is how it works:

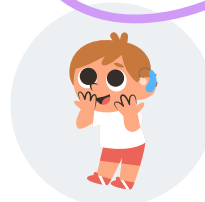
- **Higher pitch** – Speaking in a softer, higher voice.
- **Exaggerated intonation** – Using a fun, sing-song tone.
- **Slower speech** – Speaking slowly so your baby can follow.
- **Clearer articulation** – Saying words more clearly.



## Example of how parents use IDS :

When you talk to your baby, try saying, "Who's my happy baby? You are! Yes, you are!" with a big smile, using a higher voice and stretching out the words.

This special way of talking helps you baby focus, listen, and start learning language in a fun and loving way!



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# Infant-Directed Communication (IDC) for Parents of children who are D/deaf and Hard of Hearing



## Example for Parents trying to use IDC effectively in bath time:

During bath time, if your child begins to splash, you can join in by gently splashing as well and saying, "Splash, splash!" to imitate their action. As they play, describe what they're doing by saying, "You're splashing the water! It feels so wet and fun!" If your child makes a sound like "ba," respond by copying the sound and expanding on it, such as, "Ba-ba—bubbles! Pop, pop, pop!" This playful interaction supports early language development by encouraging engagement, imitation, and meaningful communication.



## Some Examples:



## Example of how parents use IDC :

Position yourself in front of your baby so they can clearly see your face. Smile and say or sign, "GOOD MORNING!" with a cheerful voice or an expressive face. If necessary, gently tap their hand to capture their attention. Repeat the greeting slowly and clearly while maintaining eye contact.



By using IDC, you're nurturing your child's communication skills through clear, expressive, and meaningful interactions, helping them connect, learn, and grow in a warm and supportive way!



## What is Infant-Directed Communication ?

IDC refers to the intentional ways caregivers adapt their communication to support early language learning in infants. For children who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH), IDC includes visual, tactile, and auditory strategies that promote attention, bonding, and language acquisition.

Here is how it works:

- Show your feelings with your face– Babies are drawn to big, clear expressions.
  - Smiling, looking surprised, or showing excitement with your face helps your baby understand emotions and builds early social skills.
- Use your hands to show meaning, starting early.
  - Pointing to objects, using simple gestures, or showing visual cues helps your baby understand what you're talking about—even before they can speak. Introducing these movements early supports language development and encourages your baby to express themselves in their way.
- Use a sing-song voice to talk to your baby.
  - Speaking in a high-pitched, slow, and playful tone (IDS) helps grab your baby's attention and makes it easier for them to hear the rhythm and sounds of language.
- Gently touch – Lightly tap your baby to get their attention.
- Go slow and clear – Speak slowly so your baby can understand and see your mouth movement.



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# Infant-Directed Speech (IDS) for Nurses in contact with Children who are D/deaf and Hard of Hearing



## What is Infant-Directed Communication ?

### Example for Nurses Using Infant-Directed Speech (IDS):

During procedures like taking a blood sample, use a warm, melodic tone and simple, soothing language to engage and comfort the infant. Narrate your actions gently—for example, “We’re cleaning your arm—tickle, tickle!”—and respond to any sounds they make with playful imitation and expansion. Phrases like “All done—1, 2, 3!” delivered with expressive facial cues can ease distress. This approach not only builds trust and reduces anxiety but also supports early language development through meaningful, responsive interaction.



### Example of How Nurses Use IDC:

Before checking an infant’s temperature or heart rate, position yourself at their eye level so they can see your face clearly. With a warm, expressive smile, gently say, “Hi there! I’m just going to check—beep beep—your temperature!” Use a soft, playful tone and pause to let the baby respond or look at you. If the infant turns away, gently touch their arm and repeat with an engaging expression: “Beep beep—just like a little robot!” This kind, interactive approach helps comfort the baby, keeps them focused, and supports early communication through emotional connection and attention.

Infant-Directed Speech (IDS) is a modified speaking style used with infants to promote language acquisition. It involves higher pitch, exaggerated prosody, slower tempo, and simplified language to enhance speech perception and learning.

Here is how it works:

- **Use a warm, engaging tone with exaggerated intonation** to capture the infant’s attention and promote bonding. Cross-cultural studies have found that IDS features, such as higher pitch and exaggerated intonation, are universally used to engage infants and foster social connection.
  - Link: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01410-x>
- **Slow down speech and use clear articulation** when speaking to infants during routine care (e.g., feeding, diaper changes). Research indicates that the slower speech rate and clearer articulation in IDS help infants process language more effectively.
  - Link: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0151518>
- **Encourage responsive interactions** by acknowledging infant vocalizations and facial expressions, fostering early communication. Engaging in back-and-forth interactions using IDS has been shown to support infants' language development and social engagement.
  - Link: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721415595345>
- **Incorporate repetition and gestures** when speaking to infants, reinforcing language exposure in a natural setting. Using repetitive language patterns and gestures in IDS can enhance infants' attention and support language learning.
  - Link: <https://seattleite.com/2019/12/19/baby-talk-vs-parentese-with-dr-patricia-kuhl/>
- **Educate parents and caregivers** on the developmental benefits of IDS, integrating simple techniques into their daily care routines. Informing caregivers about
  - Link: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797613488145>



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# Infant-Directed Speech (IDS) for SLPs in contact with children who are D/deaf and Hard of Hearing



## What is Infant-Directed Communication ?

Infant-Directed Speech (IDS) is a modified speaking style used with infants to promote language acquisition. It involves higher pitch, exaggerated prosody, slower tempo, and simplified language to enhance speech perception and learning.

Here is how it works:

- **Use an expressive, warm tone and exaggerated intonation during sessions or caregiver modeling.**

IDS often includes higher pitch, slower tempo, and exaggerated intonation. These characteristics naturally attract infants' attention and foster emotional connection. Research shows these acoustic patterns are consistent across cultures.

- Link: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01410-x>

- **Model slow, clearly articulated speech when working with infants and coaching caregivers.** IDS supports language processing by slowing the speech rate and enhancing phonetic clarity. This allows infants more time to segment sounds and better understand speech during everyday routines like feeding or dressing.

- Link: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0151518>

- **Promote turn-taking by responding to infants' sounds and expressions.** Encourage caregivers to engage in responsive interactions, such as mirroring vocalizations or facial cues. Research shows that these back-and-forth exchanges using IDS promote social-emotional connection and early language skills.

- Link: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721415595345>

- **Incorporate repetition, gestures, and sign support to enhance meaning.** Using repeated words and consistent gestures during play or daily care routines reinforces language input and helps infants associate sounds with actions and objects, boosting comprehension.

- Link: <https://seattleite.com/2019/12/19/baby-talk-vs-parentese-with-dr-patricia-kuhl/>

### Example for SLPs using IDC effectively during play-based intervention:

While playing with stacking blocks during a session, follow the child's lead by stacking alongside them. If the child places a block and makes a sound like "da," respond warmly and say, "Da-da—down it goes!" in an animated, sing-song voice. As the tower grows, narrate their actions clearly and slowly: "You put the block on top! Now it's so tall!" Use big facial expressions, pointing, and repetition: "Tall, tall, tall!" If the tower falls, react with surprise and say, "Uh-oh! It fell down! Let's build it again!"

This kind of playful, responsive communication supports language development by promoting joint attention, imitation, and emotional engagement—core elements of effective IDC in therapy.



### Example for SLPs using IDS effectively during a routine care moment:

During a therapy session, while preparing a child for snack, position yourself at eye level and use a warm, engaging tone with exaggerated intonation:

"Let's put on your bib—up it goes, over your head!"

Maintain eye contact and smile to encourage joint attention. If the child vocalizes or gestures, respond promptly by expanding their attempt: "You said 'ah!' Yes, it's snack time—yum, yum!"

Incorporate simple gestures, such as pointing to the food or rubbing your stomach, to reinforce meaning.

This interaction combines key elements of Infant-Directed Speech—such as heightened prosody, slower rate, and responsiveness—to support attention, vocabulary growth, and early communicative exchanges within a functional, familiar routine.

