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## In praise of ... Talk to Your Baby

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Editorial

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Do we need to talk to babies? The organisation Talk to Your Baby says yes. In particular, we need to engage more and communicate more with babies from nought to two years old. The organisation, part of the National Literacy Trust and developed by its retiring manager Liz Attenborough, has based its work on the truth that most brain development occurs in the first 24 months, exactly the stage at which babies and toddlers need the benefit of a language-rich start to life. TTYB aims to help parents and carers to get over the embarrassment factor – "I feel stupid talking to my baby" – by showing how much difference such communication makes to emotional and learning skills later in life. Lots of simple techniques have been developed to encourage even the most reticent parent to gas away with their baby. One of TTYB's campaigns, started at the behest of teachers worried about high levels of poor communication among children starting school, has been to point out the malign effects of forward-facing buggies. Babies are born to be sociable. The forward-facing buggy (designed by aircraft designer Owen Maclaren and popular because of its collapsible structure) puts oncoming strangers in the line of vision – useless for chatting. Careful research and talking to manufacturers is leading to the greater availability and declining cost of "facing-baby" buggies. A simple idea, but one which – if well executed and developed in large enough numbers – can have a disproportionate impact on countless lives.

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