

Avoid Awkward Silence as an At-Home Parent: Six Ways to Develop Early Vocabulary Skills

Description

Me: Hey Avery, are you hungry?

Avery: â€¦â€¦

Me: Okaaayyyy, how about we try walking?

Avery: â€¦â€¦

Me: Whatâ€™s wrong, did you poop?

Avery: â€¦â€¦â€¦

And so on and so forth. Thus is the typical conversation most parents have with their babies.

When you start life as an at-home parent your infant, silence is inevitable and expected. Sure, thereâ€™s crying and cooing, but unless youâ€™re caring for other kids at the talking age, you have no one to actually converse with when at home.

We only have one kid, so itâ€™s just Avery and me spending every day together, learning and growing along the way. I love it. Itâ€™s fulfilling, rewarding, better than sitting in an office (to me), way better than daycare (financially and physically), and it sometimes drives me *INSANE*!

Oops, did I say that? Itâ€™s not when sheâ€™s extremely fussy and screaming out loud, or when sheâ€™s pulling out my leg hair as Iâ€™m trying to cook meals for day; itâ€™s the silence. Crying, I can take, but sometimes it gets quiet, a little *too* quiet.



Donâ€™t mind me, Iâ€™ll just sit here and stare.

As I first mentioned, itâ€™s expected from an infant, but at a year old and close to making actual words with her babbling, itâ€™s just awkward when she turns silent. Iâ€™ll be working in the kitchen as sheâ€™s happily pushing her boxes across the floor (yes, weâ€™re classy) or weâ€™ll be playing in the front room, but all too often, she turns silent and stares into space.

I know youâ€™re thinking, â€œMust be poop!â€•, and I used to think the same, but thatâ€™s usually accompanied by grunting and a strawberry-red face. Iâ€™ll check anyway because you never know (right?), but 8.3 times out of 10, thereâ€™s no poop in sightâ€™or smell.

Luckily, there are solutions to most problems in the world, and Iâ€™ve found six that help combat the awkward silence as an at-home parent. As she grows, many of these will act as a wonderful base to build upon and hopefully expand her vocab skills and mind.

1. Explain what you are doing. When Iâ€™m in the kitchen (itâ€™s a lot!), Iâ€™ll catch Avery staring at me as I work. Instead of just carrying on in silence, Iâ€™ll explain to her exactly what Iâ€™m doing as if sheâ€™s a student anxious to jot down all of my notes. I do this for everything from the exercises I do when working out and even during diaper changes. This gives me the pseudo-conversation I sometimes miss and helps keep her engaged in daily activities.

2. Explain what they are doing. Since it would be narcissistic to only talk about yourself, describe the actions your kid is making too. This goes along with number 1 above, and will help them begin to understand their capabilities.



Yes dear, you are accurately portraying Chucky, the killer doll.

3. Make eye contact when speaking to your child. In doing so, your child may be more inclined to communicate. Of course, watch what youâ€™re doing too; like changing dirty diapers!! Iâ€™ve tried looking into her eyes while explaining how Iâ€™m cleaning her bottom and next thing I knew, well, you know. #ParentingFail

4. Read to them often. Even when they can't stand still and try to tear the pages from your hands as they scream, keep reading! Avery does this to Going Mom and I daily, but trust me, you'll help build vocabulary skills and maybe even have them reading before others their age. Make sure to choose books with big, bright colors and fun pictures. *Moby Dick* is not the best book to start with. ðŸ™,

5. Acknowledge their sounds and actions. When Avery started blowing raspberries, we made sure to return the action and let her know what she was doing. Now that's she's babbling a lot, we repeat (as good as we can) the string of "words" she spouts out and encourage words like "momma" and "da da". Lately, Avery has become an expert at [sticking out her tongue](#) on queue and it makes my wife and I so proud!

6. Play music. You don't have to have "The Wheels on the Bus" on repeat, play actual music, whatever you like, and it'll be fine. This is a big one for keeping sane and having some kind of background noise at all times. Almost every day, I turn on Pandora with a mix of my favorite channels and frequently sing out loud with Avery staring at me in bewilderment. Despite the strange looks you might receive, have no doubt that your kid will pick up on words that help expand their vocabulary. For this reason, I tend to stay away from the Eminem station.

Although you can never fully escape the awkward silence when you're an at-home parent with only one kid who's not yet talking, these six solutions will help get you through this time and help build your child's speech and learning skills as well.

Have you made use of any of these before?

Do you have other tips/advice to share?

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