



a family support program
www.nicunest.org

Your baby loves your voice!

Newborns prefer their parents' voices over other sounds. Even in the womb, fetuses hear, remember, and respond to sounds you make daily. After babies are born, they recognize and are comforted by those familiar sounds – *especially your voice!*

Sing lullabies & favorite songs.

Singing to your baby helps him/her develop language skills. Babies benefit from what they learn of tone, rhythm, and rhyme when you sing or say nursery rhymes! *Your voice is always better than the radio* – even if you don't think you sing well! Baby Einstein is nice, but your voice is always better. From you, your baby will learn to reciprocate and communicate.

Speak soft and soothingly.

Hearing your voice can soothe your baby, even when you cannot touch him/her. Try making different soothing sounds and spend time observing your baby's reactions. Are there certain sounds, words, or songs your little one seems to like or respond to the best?

Read a book or tell a story.

Babies will come to recognize and often prefer stories that were read to them early on! Even if your baby feels far away and separated from you by a closed isolette, your baby is listening and especially attends to your voice. When you repeat the same stories (or songs), he/she will become familiar with them. The special repetitive stories you tell can become a comfort to them, bonding time for you, and can also help your child develop their vocabulary later on!

Check out a book from the library.

Ask your nurse if your NICU has a book cart or library you can use. Also, it is never too soon to connect with your home library. Some libraries may offer easy to grab tote-bags full of baby-appropriate books for you to check out. If not, librarians are great at making recommendations. Consider visiting your local branch to jumpstart your baby's path to literacy!