STAGES OF EARLY VOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The process of early vocal development includes 5 stages that an infant goes through as they develop the ability to produce and control the speech sounds in their language(s) on their way to saying first words.

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<th>STAGE</th>
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| Reflexive Crying and Vegetative Sounds | Birth – 3 months | - Cries, burps, sneezes, sucking and other vegetative sounds  
- Infant’s vocal chords vibrate and airflow through throat is stopped and started  
- These sounds are the first stimulation of the vocal apparatus that will later produce speech |
| Cooing and Laughter             | 2 – 5 months | - Coos – sounds babies make when they appear to be happy (e.g., /oooo/ and /aaaa/)  
- Social interaction elicits cooing and laughter  
- The quality changes with age (different vowel like sounds, longer series of sounds)  
- Consonants begin, usually back sounds like /k/ and /g/ (e.g., gaas and goos)  
- This is the beginning of being social beings and the foundation for communication |
| Vocal Play                      | 4 – 8 months | - Infants experiment with their mouth, throat and tongue  
- Begin by producing noises to play with vocal apparatus (e.g., squeals, growls, raspberries, etc.)  
- Move on to using a variety of different consonant and vowel like sounds and an increase in how often babies make these sounds  
- Gain increasing control over their vocal apparatus and their speech sound repertoire continues to grow  
- Will start to make long series of sounds called marginal babbling (e.g., yaoikadab) |
| Babbling                        | 6 – 9 months | - Production of consonant sounds usually front of the mouth (b, m, p, n and d)  
- Canonical babbling – same sounds repeated (e.g., babababa)  
- Difference between this and marginal babbling is that this has true syllables (CV) produced in strings  
- Not done to communicate but this is a major milestone since all babies babble and a lack of, or restricted babbling is a red flag for other delays or disorders. |
| Non-reduplicated Babbling       | 9 – 12 months | - Different sound combinations are used (e.g., bagamata)  
- Wider range of consonant sounds emerge – h, w, j, p, b, m, t, d, n, k, g  
- Prosody included - intonation contours of speech  
- When infants combine prosody and consonant sounds their output starts to sound like adult speech without real words (a.k.a. Jargon)  
- Sounds start to be more specific to the target language(s) the baby is learning |
| First Words                     | 9 – 14 months | - Approximation to the word used in adult language  
- Used with consistent meaning  
- Made up of true syllables (CV, CVC, CVCV)  
- Said to intentionally send a message to another person  
- Protowords (e.g., words invented by the child) may be used at this stage too |

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