

Meaningful

What is this?

Even before they are born, babies tune in to what we say and how we say it. They pick up meanings long before they say their first word.

So if we chat to them using real language, tell them what's going on, and what we are doing, then we are adding meaning for them.

Why does it matter?

Babies are often fascinated by what we have to say, even if they don't understand it. All the time they are building their language capabilities not just from the words they hear but from how it is said. The rising and falling of the voice as we speak a sentence is something they will use to develop their own language skills.

And we all lock on better when an interaction feels meaningful. So it strengthens the bond too for both us and the baby.

What does it look like?

- Using real language in a chat or to say what's going on
- Pointing out interesting things and chatting about them
- Notice baby's interest and chat about that

It is usually very simple things such as:

Baby is	So we ...
Being changed	Tell the story of what is happening as it happens, same way each time
Out and about	Notice what they look at and chat about it Point out interesting things
Chatting	Treat what they "say" as if it means something, and respond It doesn't matter if you don't know, just say anything!
Playing	Tell the story of what they are doing, "ooh, jingly keys!" Just say what you see and how it feels
Sleepy	Slow and calm and soothe them to sleep