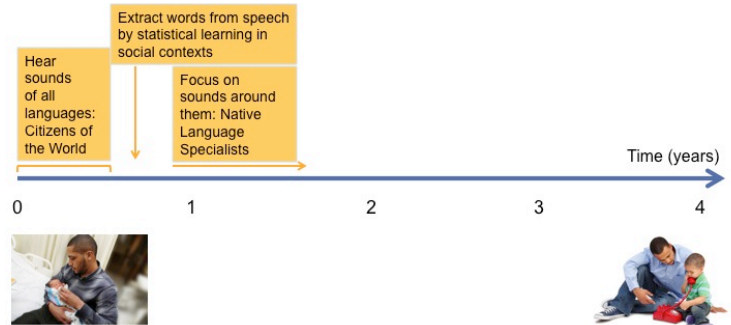


# Language Development: Learning the Sounds of Language

Infants learn how to produce speech by listening to sounds.



## The Take-Home

- Children are geniuses at learning language. In fact, they are better language learners than adults. Language learning is one skill that has a sensitive period, or a time in development when the brain is particularly ready to learn.
- Listening to speech allows infants to produce the same sounds, and then transition to words and sentences. Those infants who are more effective “listeners” in the first year of life are better prepared for producing words and sentences later on.

Want to  
Learn  
More?



## Science Says

- Language learning begins before birth. A young brain is particularly ready to learn language.
- When listening to language, infants are sensitive to how frequently they hear specific language sounds. This helps them learn the sounds of their native language.
- Face-to-face interactions are critical for language learning. In the first year of life, social interactions expose children to language. Social interactions also prepare the infant brain for speaking.



## Try it at Home

- Young infants learn conversation skills from their first coos, gestures, and body movements. Responding to your infant teaches him that he is part of the conversation.
- Using parentese will support your child’s language development. Parentese is a sing-song, exaggerated tone of voice that infants love to listen to!
- Follow your child’s lead! If your infant points to something, name and describe the object they are pointing to. “You see the ball! The ball is smooth and round.”