Children communicate with us for many reasons! They begin by letting us know that they do or do not want something. Then they start to show off for attention and want you to notice them by waving or playing games such as peek-a-boo. As they become older, children begin to draw your attention to objects or actions like pointing to a toy and saying "oo" to get you to look at it.

Children also communicate with us in so many ways! They begin letting us know what they want with smiles, tears, and the way they move their bodies. As they get older, they let us know with specific gestures.

Some of the gestures your child may make to communicate are reaching toward an object he or she wants, pointing to things he or she wants you to notice, and giving things to you for help. Children generally progress from using gestures and sounds alone to using gestures together with sounds to communicate. As children become more effective at using words to communicate, they use fewer gestures and begin to use words alone.

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**Ways your child may communicate**

- crying
- smiling
- laughing
- turning away
- making vowel sounds (like “aahh,” “eeeee”)
- looking at you
- copying the sounds you make
- using facial expressions
- reaching
- pointing
- pushing things away
- giving things to you
- showing things to you
- shaking head “no”
- waving “bye bye”
- making consonant and vowel sounds (like “bah bah”) with gestures
- pantomiming part of a routine acting out what they are saying using sounds that stand for words
- using words
- combining words together

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**What your child’s communication may mean**

- Requesting help
- Asking you to do an action
- Asking for an object
- Protesting that they do not want an object
- Protesting that they do not want to do an action
- Wanting you to notice him/her
- Showing off for attention
- Greeting by waving “hi” or “bye-bye”
- Requesting comfort
- Requesting a social game like peek-a-boo
- Request permission to carry out an action
- Wanting you to notice an action or object
- Commenting about an object
- Commenting about an action
- Asking a question to gain information