

Symbolic Sounds

Before learning their first words, lots of children use sounds which are associated with the object/item they represent. These are short sounds or words which are:

- Easy to copy
- Fun to use
- Understood by adults

Try making these sounds when you are out and about, playing with toys, looking at books, playing games etc. They encourage early vocalisation, imitation, early vocabulary and understanding of the words they represent. Do not ask your child to copy the sounds but instead pause, giving them an opportunity to copy if they want to.

Some examples of symbolic sounds:

Everyday

- ⇒ 'weee' - on a swing at the playground
- ⇒ 'mmm' - for food
- ⇒ 'tick tock' - for a watch/clock
- ⇒ 'uh-oh' - if you slip or drop something
- ⇒ 'shhh' - be quiet
- ⇒ 'aww' - when giving a cuddle
- ⇒ 'pop' with bubbles
- ⇒ 'bang' on the drum



Transport

- ⇒ 'beep beep', 'brmm brmm' - cars
- ⇒ 'choo choo' - train
- ⇒ 'nee naw' - police car / ambulance / fire engine



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Animals

- ⇒ 'quack quack' - duck
- ⇒ 'woof woof' - dog
- ⇒ 'meow' - cat
- ⇒ 'moo' - cow
- ⇒ 'rawr' - lion, dinosaur

Make your voice interesting by making it loud, quiet or excited when you use these sounds. You can also use gestures, for example gesturing honking a horn as you say 'beep beep'.