

# Babies grasp speech before they utter their first word, a study finds

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## *The Washington Post:*

Babies start with simple vowel sounds — oohs and aaahs. A mere months later, the cooing turns into babbling — “bababa” — showing off a newfound grasp of consonants.

A new study has found that a key part of the brain involved in forming speech is firing away in babies as they listen to voices around them. This may represent a sort of mental rehearsal leading up to the true milestone that occurs after only a year of life: baby’s first words.

Any parent knows how fast babies learn how to comprehend and use language. The skill develops so rapidly and seemingly without much effort, but how do they do it?

Researchers at the University of Washington are a step closer to unraveling the mystery of how babies learn how to speak. They had a group of 7- and 11-month-old infants listen to a series of syllables while sitting in a brain scanner.

Read the whole story: [\*The Washington Post\*](#)