

Teach Your Toddler to say "Mama"



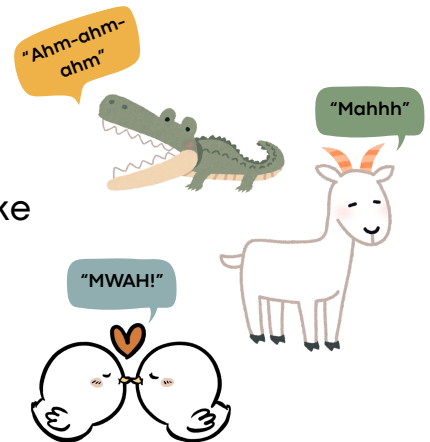
**SALLY
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Speech Therapy

There are many factors contributing to what your toddler's first words might be, but that doesn't mean you can't give "mama" a boost by trying these three research-backed strategies!

1. Take the Sound Out of Context

Sample Activities:

- Pretend to eat your baby's feet while saying "amamam!"
- Add a "mah!" sound effect to your baby's favorite game like chase or tickle
- Use "mah mah" as a goat noise during songs and books
- Blow kisses with an exaggerated "mmmwah" sound



2. Change your Intonation

Sample Activities:

- Read books like "Where is Baby's Mommy?" or "Are You My Mother?" and model a sing-song "ma-ma!" (high to low) or "Mama?" with a rising intonation, like a question
- Try the same ideas while playing peek-a-boo. While hiding, say "Mama?" and when you pop out, say it again in an excited voice



3. Reduce the Pressure

- Model "mama" naturally throughout the day: "Give it to Mama," "Mama's turn," "Mama loves you!"
- Avoid directly prompting your toddler to "Say mama" or repeatedly asking "Who's that?"
- Create natural, low pressure opportunities for your toddler to use the word: like pausing before picking them up and modeling "mama" as a way for them to get your attention

