



## Is "baby talk" easier for baby to learn?

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Through learning to speak, the children will often mispronounce words. That is to be expected. However, that is meant to be an intermediate step toward learning the full word, even if it will take a while until the child reaches that goal.

### He says "kiki"

When the child is aiming for the word "cookie", it is very common that both syllables won't be pronounced correctly. The last one being the most recent syllable the child heard, it is very frequent that it is the one he will say. So the word "cookie" becomes "ki". Over time, the child then realizes that this particular word has two syllables, so with his limited understanding, he might use that syllable he knows how to pronounce, twice, giving the word "kiki".

### What if I say "kiki" myself?

Some adults will use "baby words" like this to talk to the child for various reasons. Since the child might actually be saying the word in that manner, he must understand that better, right? Wrong. The child's understanding is based on the words he hears and the object, person or action he has associated it with. The length of the word, or the syllables used have little to do with that understanding. If the adults use "kiki" instead of "cookie", the child will simply understand that "kiki" is the actual name of this object, and will keep calling it that way. In fact, the child now things he has achieve the goal of naming this object the same way the adults are saying it, and will not try to learn the word "cookie" that he does not hear much anyways.

### What if I say "kiki" just for a while?

The sound combination of "k + i + k + i" might be easier to pronounce, especially since it is twice the same syllable, and the child might possibly repeat that sequence sooner than the sequence of "c + oo + k + ie". Starting with "kiki" just until the child can say it, and then move on to "cookie" might sound like a good idea, but to the child, it is a different word completely. He had learned to associated "kiki" with that sweet thing he likes to eat, and then, one day, he hears



that it is now called "cookie". So, all the times the child heard "kiki" and made the connection with that food is now thrown out the window as we start using a different word. It is basically now a wasted learning period.

## Some words are so long

In day to day language, some words are short and some words are longer. The most common words around the child's life are often shorter ("milk", "juice", "teddy", "up", "down", "more", "go", etc.) but that is not always the case since we also have words like "pajama", "potato", "macaroni" that could be meaningful for the child. Even though the longer words will likely be mispronounced longer, the child will still know and understand their meaning quite early. There is no need to shorten them up, thinking the child will learn them sooner. That is just an illusion.

Your child might surprise you and learn a long word faster than you expect, but even if it is not the case, keep giving the proper model, use the correct word, however long it is, so your child will know what the goal is. Trying to take a shortcut will just make the learning process more complex for your child.

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