



# 5 Ways Children Communicate Without Words and How Caregivers Can Respond

## Smiling

“Oh, that made you happy!”

## Throwing food or objects

“You’re all done. Okay, I’ll take it. Let’s find something you like better. Here is your pup-pup.  
Show me how you love your pup-pup.”

## Pulling on parent

“Daddy. You want daddy? What can I do for you, Sweetie?”

## Babbling or vocalizing

“I hear you. Ba-ba-ba, you want your bottle? Let’s eat!”

## Hitting

“Ouch. That hurts mommy. I know you’re mad. You like to play outside, but it’s time to eat.  
Come help mommy fix dinner. You like that and I need a helper.”

Young children communicate with us in many ways before and even when they have words.  
How caregivers respond can positively impact a child’s social-emotional development.