

Chatterbox #36 – Baby talk

Transcript

Maura: **Coochie coochie coo!**

Harp: **Goo goo ga ga!**

Maura: **Coochie coochie coo!**

Harp: **Goo goo ga ga!**

Maura: Hello everyone. This is Maura.

Harp: And Harp.

Maura: And welcome to Culips' Chatterbox episode.

Harp: Yes. This is the episode where we chat, we talk about current events, or cultural things, or we interview people.

Maura: Yes, and don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com. That's CULIPS.com, where you can listen to all of our free ESL podcasts and you can also become a member. And when you become a member, you can get the transcript, as well as detailed explanations and a quiz.

Harp: Exactly. Now you may have heard the weird noises we were making in the beginning of this episode. Maura, what are we talking about today?

Maura: Well, today's episode is about babies.

Harp: Babies.

Maura: Oh baby! So, there is actually a lot of vocabulary related to getting pregnant, giving birth, having the baby.

Harp: For sure. And there's lots of cultural stuff associated with babies.

Maura: So, if you're having a baby or you know someone who's having a baby, this episode is for you. Yeah, so you'll learn a little bit about the culture of babies in Canada as well as some vocabulary about babies and baby things. In this episode, first we're gonna talk about what to expect when you're pregnant and before the baby is born. And then we're also going to talk about the names for things that babies need, so we're going to talk about baby stuff.

- Harp: OK.
- Maura: And the last thing we're going to do is talk about the baby as it grows. So, more vocabulary related to babies that are maybe one, two years old, that kind of thing.
- Harp: OK, sounds good. OK, so let's start with: if you're pregnant or if someone around you is pregnant. Now, one of my coworkers, she was pregnant, she had her baby, but we threw her a **baby shower**.
- Maura: Right. So, a **baby shower** is a special event that is thrown usually for the woman who's pregnant, and it's just like a little party with friends and family. And usually they give you gifts, and you eat food, and you celebrate the soon-to-be birth of the baby.
- Harp: Exactly, so for my **coworker**, we bought presents and we had some food and we just had a good time celebrating that she was pregnant and having a baby.
- Maura: Yeah, so most of the time, in a traditional **baby shower**, it's only women that attend. So it's for the female who's pregnant and it's only female guests. And another specific aspect of a **baby shower** is that it happens during the day, in the afternoon.
- Harp: Yes, exactly.
- Maura: It's not usually a night thing.
- Harp: No, it's in the afternoon.
- Maura: Yeah, but nowadays things are changing a little bit and sometimes you might hear of a baby shower where there are men and women.
- Harp: Yeah. Because we threw the baby shower at work, there were the male colleagues and the female colleagues, everyone was there.
- Maura: OK, cool. So, you have a **baby shower** when you're expecting. Often, this happens if it's your first baby, but if it's your second or third baby, you might not have a **baby shower**.
- Harp: Yeah, because I think, traditionally, a **baby shower** is when the woman who is pregnant would get gifts to prepare her for her upcoming baby.
- Maura: Right. So she would get all the things that she needed from the people at the baby shower, like, maybe clothes for the baby, a **crib**, or a car seat, or...

- Harp: a **stroller**.
- Maura: Yeah, there are so many things that you might need for a baby. Also, another thing that people talk about when they know you're pregnant is your **due date**.
- Harp: Yes. Like, when are you going to have the baby or when are you expected to have the baby?
- Maura: Right, so your due date is exactly that: your doctor gives you a specific date on a calendar and says this is the date you're due, which is funny, because people rarely have their baby on that day.
- Harp: Exactly, it's usually just an estimate.
- Maura: Yeah, but they do have one specific day. Sometimes the baby is born early, sometimes the baby is born late, you never know.
- Harp: Nope.
- Maura: But some people have fun with this and their friends try to guess which day the baby will be born. So for fun, maybe you choose the day before the due date and you say "I'm going to bet \$5 that the baby will be born one day early," and another friend says "I think the baby will be born 5 days late." So it's a fun game that people play; they bet on which day the baby will be born.
- Harp: Yeah, another thing that people usually bet on is if it's going to be a boy or a girl, if the woman who's pregnant doesn't know. Then some people think, oh it's a boy, or it's gonna be a girl, and they bet on that.
- Maura: Yep, that's true. It's interesting, because a lot of people choose to know what sex their baby is going to be before, because the technology is there and, in Canada, it's pretty easy to find out if you're going to have a boy or a girl.
- Harp: Yeah, that seems to be the first question that people ask, I find.
- Maura: But so many people actually don't want to know and they choose to wait and leave it a surprise.
- Harp: Yep.
- Maura: So, if you don't have your baby before your due date and you pass your **due date**, sometimes you might need to get induced to have your baby, which basically means the doctor gives you some medicine so that you start to

have the baby. I was actually induced.

Harp: Oh really? Your mom had to be induced? You were late?

Maura: Yup, exactly, I was 2 weeks late.

Harp: Oh, wow. That's a long time.

Maura: A trend nowadays is **natural delivery**.

Harp: Yes. So that means no painkillers, no **epidural**, none of that.

Maura: Right, so more and more women are choosing to give birth without, like you said, Harp, a lot of the drugs and other things that they use to help the pain go away. Some women actually give birth in bathtubs.

Harp: Yes, a **water birth**.

Maura: Exactly. And another thing that's popular is using **midwives**.

Harp: Yes, **midwives** are definitely becoming more and more popular.

Maura: And a **midwife** is a specially trained woman who helps with **giving birth**. So she's not quite a doctor but her specialty is specifically with helping woman **give birth**.

Harp: Yeah. You know Maura, one of my cousins is studying to become a **midwife**.

Maura: Oh, wow!

Harp: So she's doing her training, and in the end, when she's finished school, she's going to be trained on helping a woman have a baby, either in their house or in a hospital.

Maura: Yeah. I'm sure it would be a very exciting and emotional job.

Harp: Yeah, she's done a lot of training and she's witnessed a lot of births and she really loves the whole job and the career.

Maura: OK, now that is what people are talking about as you're pregnant, and as you're **giving birth**. Now let's talk about the things you might need for your baby after you've had the baby, you bring them home from the hospital...

Harp: Yeah, we mentioned a couple of these things before, but let's define them.

- Maura: Right, so you might need a **crib**.
- Harp: Yes, for the baby to sleep in.
- Maura: Right, so a **crib** is a special bed for the baby. And the room where the baby sleeps, especially a newborn baby, is called a **nursery**.
- Harp: Yes, it's decorated with lots of pretty pictures for the baby. It's pretty; it's a nice room.
- Maura: Yeah, a lot of people prepare beforehand and decorate the **nursery** and prepare for the baby. Another thing you need for a baby is a **stroller**.
- Harp: For sure you need a **stroller**. So, this is basically a cart that you can put the baby in when you go out, walking, shopping, to the park, anywhere.
- Maura: Right. So any time you want to go somewhere with the baby, if you don't want to carry **him or her**, you probably wanna put **it** in a **stroller**.
- Harp: Yup, and you know, something funny I saw one day in the winter last year. I saw a woman with a **stroller** and it had skis on it!
- Maura: I saw that too!
- Harp: Yeah, because we have so much snow in the winter that if you have wheels on a **stroller**, you're gonna be stuck. So she had skis and she was just floating along, on top of the snow.
- Maura: I thought that was so awesome when I saw that.
- Harp: **Genius!**
- Maura: Yes, and definitely necessary on the streets in Canada.
- Harp: For sure.
- Maura: Um...some other things you might need for a brand new baby are the clothes and there are some funny little names for baby clothes. The first one is called a **sleepers**, and you might be able to guess that this is what a baby wears when they're going to sleep.
- Harp: Yes.

- Maura: It's like a one piece suit with buttons down the front.
- Harp: Yes, and another word for this is a **onesie**.
- Maura: Right. Again, the reason it's called the **onesie** is because it is one piece of clothing; it's all attached, it covers the feet, goes all the way up to the neck.
- Harp: Yeah, usually it has a little hood on it for the baby.
- Maura: Mmhmm, and there are also special little shoes, kind of like slippers for babies.
- Harp: Yeah, called **booties**.
- Maura: Yes, so also, **booties** comes from the word *boot*.
- Harp: Yes, so it's little shoes that the baby wears.
- Maura: And all of these words are so cute sounding, aren't they Harp? You know, we have **bootie**, **onesie**.
- Harp: Yeah, they're just cute words.
- Maura: Yeah, they're appropriate sounding for babies.
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: Now, so now let's talk about as the baby grows and the baby is making little sounds, here and there, and then eventually the baby says one of its first words.
- Harp: Yes, and one of the typical first words is some variation of **mom** or **dad**. It can be **ma** or **pa** or...
- Maura: Or **mamma**. Yeah, so those are really the classic first words for babies, but sometimes the first word is something completely different.
- Harp: For sure.
- Maura: It's often a short word though, like **mom** or **cat** or **dog**, something very short.
- Harp: Yes, exactly.
- Maura: And we should also mention that from the time babies are born, humans are

speaking to them, and sometimes we speak in a very, very strange way.

Harp: Yeah, we use baby talk.

Maura: Yeah. We don't speak normally to babies like we're speaking to you. We say little cute things like **coochie coochie coo**.

Harp: **Goo goo ga ga**.

Maura: Yeah, so we make these little sounds, and sometimes when we talk to babies, we make our voices go really high. Like for example, "Oh, you're so cute."

Harp: Yes, definitely that happens.

Maura: I bet that happens in many cultures.

Harp: Yes, I think so.

Maura: Because when you're around a cute little baby, everything just becomes cute and **cutesy**, just like the names of their clothes.

Harp: Yup.

Maura: Something else that's interesting is popular names. The name Harp and the name Maura—those names aren't very popular in Canada, are they?

Harp: Not yet...

Maura: Growing up, actually my whole life, I've only met one other Maura.

Harp: Only one?

Maura: Yup, and it was very exciting.

Harp: That is exciting.

Maura: Have you ever met a Harp?

Harp: Well, the thing is, my full name is Harpreet.

Maura: OK.

Harp: And that's a very common Punjabi name. My family is Punjabi so I've met

many Harpreets and Harpreet's a unisex name, so I've met many boys who are named Harpreet and many girls who are named Harpreet. But I don't know many people who use the short term Harp.

Maura: OK.

Harp: I think it's kind of fun.

Maura: It is definitely fun, because *harp*, in English, is actually the name of a musical instrument.

Harp: Yes, people always ask me if I play the harp.

Maura: Nice. But what were the popular names, not like our names, what were the popular names last year for girls and boys?

Harp: So, last year, in 2009, the three most popular girl names were Emma, Isabelle, and Olivia.

Maura: I have to say that I definitely know a few Olivias.

Harp: I don't know any Olivias.

Maura: Oh really? And I mean Olivias that are young, that were born recently, which would make sense with this trend.

Harp: I know many Emmas though.

Maura: Yes. Emma is really popular too, I agree. The three most popular names in Canada for boys were Ethan, Jacob, and Alexander. My cousin had a son and she named him Alexander.

Harp: I really like the name Ethan.

Maura: Yup. Actually, these names don't surprise me. They sound like what I hear a lot of. I think there's a bit of a trend to use more traditional names.

Harp: Yeah, because these names, I find, you can find with older people and now with younger kids.

Maura: Yeah, these names that we listed have been around for a long time. They're not new names.

Harp: Yes. So as the baby grows little Ethan or little Emma, they hit **the terrible twos**.

- Maura: Yes, what an interesting age. So **the terrible twos** is when a baby becomes about 2 years old, and they call it **the terrible twos** because the behaviour of the baby can be very strange, or dangerous or unpredictable.
- Harp: Yes, that's when you see babies who are about 2 years old, in the stores **throwing a tantrum** because they want the candy. They **throw a lot of tantrums** because, I think it has a lot to do with...they want to communicate but they don't have a lot of vocabulary, they can't make themselves understood.
- Maura: Kind of like the **toddler**. When we talk about **a toddler**, that is someone around 2 years old to maybe 4 years old **max**, and they're really, like you say, Harp, just learning about their environment and very, very curious, walking everywhere, getting into things. So sometimes they cause a lot of trouble.
- Harp: Yeah, some parents say it's not just **the terrible twos**—it's the terrible threes and the terrible fours.
- Maura: Yeah, it doesn't stop at two. So, we hope you've learned a little bit about babies, because, really, there's so much to learn about babies.
- Harp: And they get older and there's so much more vocabulary.
- Maura: So first of all, we talked about things that happen or things that people are talking about when someone is pregnant.
- Harp: Yes, and then we talked about things that you need for a baby.
- Maura: Right, and lastly, we talked about baby names and different names for babies as they grow up. So, we hope that you learned a little bit from this episode about babies and having babies in Canada.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: So don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com, and check out what we have to offer.
- Harp: Exactly, and we'd love to hear some traditions that you have regarding babies. Leave a comment.
- Maura: Yeah, like what kind of baby talk do you have?
- Harp: Or are there any special traditions for a **baby shower**?

Maura: Let us know. Thanks a lot for listening and we'll talk to you later.

Harp: Bye everyone!

Maura: Bye!

Detailed Explanation

Coochie coochie coo and goo goo ga ga

Coochie coochie coo and **goo goo ga ga** are two expressions that people use when talking to babies. We do not use these funny expressions when talking about babies, but only talking directly to them.

The reason for this is likely that babies cannot speak, but they may make sounds, and so the people with them speak nonsense back to the baby.

Coochie coochie coo is often said while tickling or touching the baby.

A baby shower

A **baby shower** is an afternoon party that is thrown for a woman who is pregnant with her first baby. The guests are traditionally female friends and family members of the woman. Mostly everyone just chats and snacks on food throughout the party. The guests also give useful gifts for the baby. Sometimes people also play funny games that are focused on babies! A game could be trying to guess the size of the mother-to-be's belly or a competition for people to try not to say the word "baby."

Why is it called a **shower**? It's probably called a shower because the expectant mother is showered with gifts. *To be showered with something* means to receive a lot of something.

We also have wedding showers, which are parties before a woman gets married.

A coworker

Should this word have a hyphen, like **co-worker**, or not, like **coworker**? Words that used to be hyphenated, like cooperation or coordinate, are now more often being used without the hyphen. The general trend for words like these, that use a prefix like **co**, is to drop the hyphen and create one word. If you're ever not sure, check an up-to-date dictionary! Sometimes it's OK to use either a hyphen or no hyphen, as long as your consistent throughout your writing!

A crib

A baby's **crib** is the special place where the baby sleeps. It has high walls around the bed part, so that the baby cannot fall or jump out of the bed.

Some people also use *crib* as slang to mean their house or apartment, or the place they live.

A stroller

Like Harp says in this episode, **a stroller** is a seat for babies on wheels, so that they can be pushed around when they are too young to walk, or when they can't walk quickly enough to keep up with the parents.

The word **stroller** comes from the verb **to stroll**. **To stroll** means to walk leisurely, slowly, sometimes without any destination.

Some synonyms for **stroller** are *carriage* or *buggy*. In the UK **a stroller** is called a pram.

A due date

A due date for anything, not just having babies, is the date that something is supposed to happen. You can have **a due date** for an assignment at school. **The due date** for a baby is the date that the baby is supposed to be born, as predicted by the doctor.

There is currently a film in theatres in North America called **Due Date**. It stars Robert Downey Jr. and Zach Galifianakis, and it's about a man who is trying to make it home before his baby is born.

A natural delivery

When a woman chooses not to take any drugs while she is having her baby, this is called **a natural delivery**. As most everyone knows, having a baby is painful, and so most women in the western world use a variety of drugs to help with the pain. Lately, there has been a trend for women to have **natural deliveries**.

The main idea behind this trend is that in the past and in different countries around the world, many women give birth without drugs and are fully capable of doing so without any painkillers. There are also many additional personal reasons that a woman might choose to have **a natural delivery**.

This can also be described as *natural birth* or *natural childbirth*.

An epidural

An epidural is the most well known kind of painkiller that women take while they are giving birth. It is a drug that is given at a certain point in the delivery that causes a woman to lose sensation in the painful area and so feel less pain.

A water birth

This is another trend for women having babies. When a woman gives birth in water, or in a large bathtub, this is called **a water birth**. Most **water births** happen at the woman's home, called a homebirth, and are monitored by a midwife. Some people believe that giving birth in water helps with the pain, while others believe that it can be dangerous for the baby.

A midwife

A midwife is the term used for a woman who is trained in working with pregnant woman, before, during, and after they give birth. This term is used for both women and men, although most **midwives** are women.

This profession has existed for a long time, but recently it has become more popular with women. **A midwife** can assist in births that happen at home or in the hospital. If any serious complication arises, then a medical doctor will take over.

To give birth and synonyms

When a woman is having a baby, there are a few different ways that we can express this. Here's a short list of the ways that we can say that a baby is being born:

To give birth

To be in labour

To be in the delivery room

To have a baby (This can be at the exact moment or throughout the nine month pregnancy.)

Here are two examples with *to have a baby*—one when the baby is actually being born and the other earlier in the pregnancy:

Sheila: I'm **having a baby**!

Mike: Congratulations! When is your due date?

Chris: She's **having her baby**!

Amanda: Wow! When did she go to the hospital?

A nursery

A nursery is the name for the baby's room. People also simply say *the baby's room* just as often as they call it **a nursery**.

We also have nursery school here in Canada, which is the school that some children go to for one or two years before kindergarten, the first official year of school.

A special place where you can go to buy different plants and flowers, and that usually has a greenhouse, is also called **a nursery**. This is because it is a place where you have young or baby trees that need to be taken care of. This is just like how a newborn baby needs a lot of care and attention.

How to refer to an unborn baby – him, her, or it

Before the baby is born and before anyone knows what sex the baby will be, people still want to talk about the baby! Sometimes people are specific and say *him or her*, or *he or she* every time they speak of the unborn baby. Other people do what we do at Culips when the sex is unknown or unimportant; we say *they, them, or their*.

What can also sometimes happen is that someone refers to the baby as *it*. Maura does this in this episode! Most people do not like to do this because *it* is used to talk about things not people, but it can be simpler than saying *him or her* all the time, or than saying *they*, since that's usually reserved for the plural.

Genius!

A genius is someone who is very intelligent. To simply call out **genius**, like Harp does in this episode, means to say that what was just said before was an intelligent, great, or brilliant idea. In this case, **genius** is used as an adjective too.

The invention of skis on a stroller in Canada is **genius** because it is the best way to use a stroller smoothly when the streets are all snowy.

Here is another example with **genius**:

Fred: How can we fit this last box in the trunk of the car?

Marilyn: I have an idea. Let's just take this box here out, and then fit it in the back. Then we should be able to fit the last box over here.

Fred: **Genius!** Great idea Marilyn.

A sleeper or a onesie

These are a couple of the cute words used for some baby clothing. These words are used interchangeably, meaning that one can replace the other. So sometimes **a onesie** is **a sleeper** and sometimes **a sleeper** is **a onesie**. Other people use them to mean something different: **a onesie** is a one-piece bodysuit for a baby. **A sleeper** is a one-piece body suit for a baby that is made for sleeping.

Booties

Booties is the word for little shoes, like boots, that are made for babies. Like we say in this episode, these words **booties** and **onesie** are cute little words for baby things. For some reason, in English, adding an *-ie* or the E sound to the ending to a word makes it sound cute and small. This is why we associate these words with babies or baby things.

Baby's first words

A baby's first word in English can be almost anything. It is often a short, simple word or one syllable. And most commonly it is a word that means mom or dad, like *mama* or *papa*, because a word like this is a very simple sound to make.

With the popularity of video cameras, you can find many videos of a baby's first words on YouTube. Aren't they cute?

Cutesy

Cutesy extends from the word *cute* to mean that something is forcibly cute. Words like **booties** and **onesie** are **cutesy** words, which are intentionally trying to sound cute.

The terrible twos

The terrible twos are the time in a child's life around two years old when they start to act in a way that some people might call terrible. For some people and their children this is not a terrible time, or not as terrible as this expression makes it out to be. This is the time when the child is making a lot of discoveries, learning to walk and talk, and is interested in many things in their environment. Of course, this time can be a lot of work for parents because they need to constantly watch their child to keep them out of danger. Sometimes we refer to the terrible twos as plural, because they're referring to months or years of a child's life, and sometimes we refer to the terrible twos as singular because they're one specific time, so we can say either "the terrible twos is..." or "The terrible twos are..."

A toddler

The exact age range for **a toddler** is not specific. The word **toddler** comes from the verb **to toddle**, which is to move around in small unsteady steps, like you might fall over. This is what a child is like when they first learn to walk.

To throw a tantrum

A tantrum is a sudden outburst of violent or aggressive behaviour by a child because they are frustrated or angry. **A tantrum** involves a child crying, screaming, and moving their body around. An adult could have a tantrum too, but it is most often children.

We can say **to throw a tantrum** or **to have a tantrum**.

Max

Max is the short form of maximum, which is the highest possible amount or limit of something. When speaking, people often say *max* to mean that something is the maximum.

In this episode, Maura says that four years old would be the maximum age to be considered a toddler.

Here are a couple of other examples with *max*:

Gene: I'm not sure. How much do you think it will cost?

Victoria: It should cost, **max**, 20 dollars.

Sam: How many people will fit in the room?

Owen: There will be a max of 30 people allowed to come.

Quiz**1. When do people say *coochie coochie coo*?**

- a) when touching and talking to a baby
- b) when talking to a pregnant woman
- c) when having a baby
- d) when pushing a baby in a stroller

2. What is the name of the afternoon party that women have for the woman expecting a baby?

- a) a baby party
- b) a baby shower
- c) a baby event
- d) a baby bath

3. Connie: I'm going for walk with the baby. Where is the _____?

Please fill in the blank.

- a) stalker
- b) car seat
- c) cart
- d) stroller

4. What is the name for the predicted date that the baby will be born?

- a) the birthday
- b) the born day
- c) the born date
- d) the due date

5. Which is NOT a popular trend in giving birth?

- a) using a midwife
- b) water births
- c) pizza deliveries
- d) natural deliveries

6. What is the name for a baby's room and a place to buy young plants?

- a) a nursery
- b) a baby's room
- c) a carriage
- d) a garden

7. What are the terrible twos?

- a) having two babies at one time
- b) when children around the age of two behave dangerously
- c) when children walk on two feet
- d) when children can put on two shoes

8. Why would a child throw a tantrum?

- a) because they are angry and frustrated
- b) because they are very happy
- c) because they feel energetic
- d) because they are very sad and lonely

Answers: 1.a 2.b 3.d 4.d 5.c 6.a 7.b 8.a